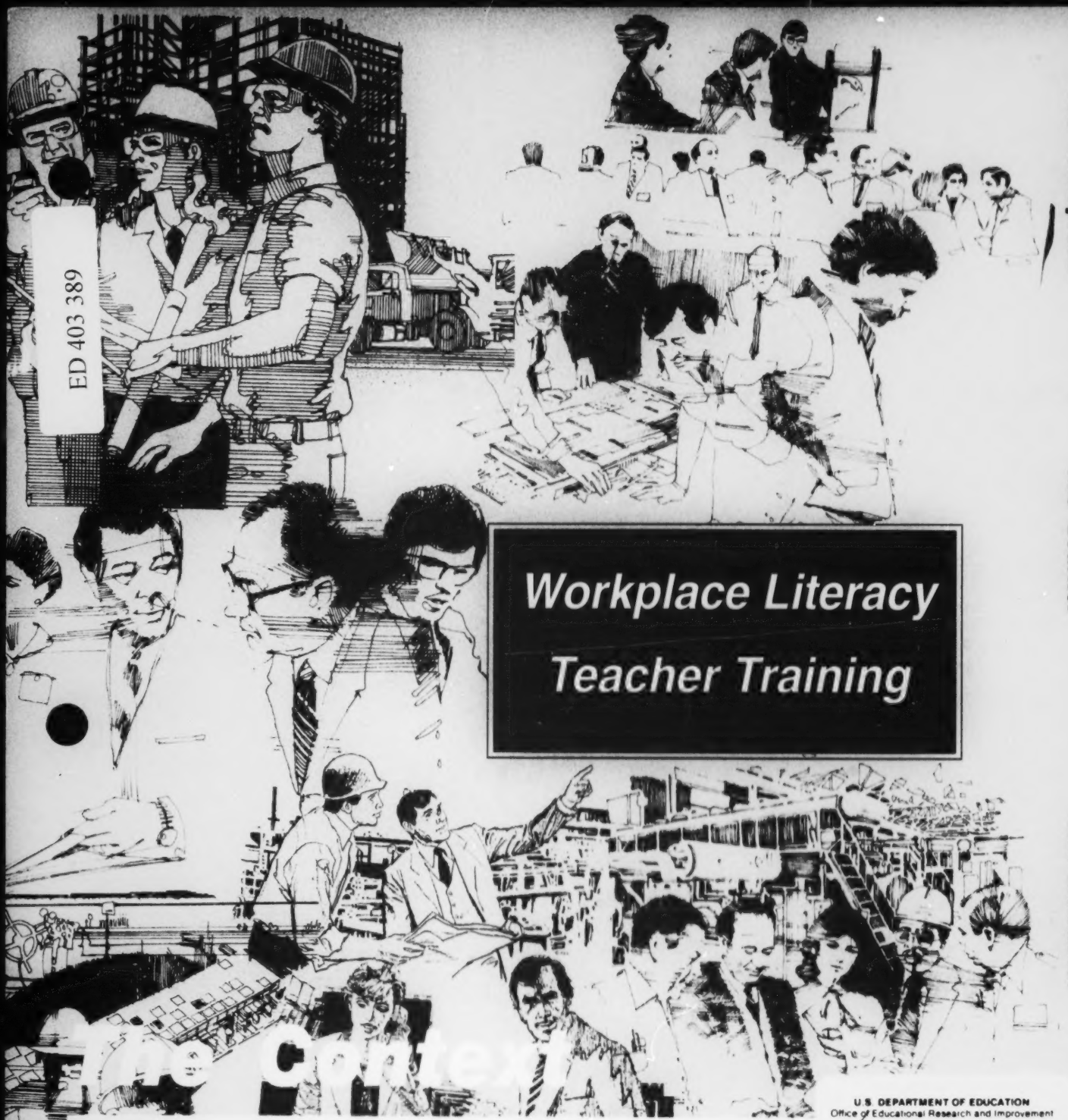
DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 403 389 CE 073 121

AUTHOR	Harrington, Lois G.; And Others
TITLE	Workplace Literacy Teacher Training: The Context.
INSTITUTION	Lake County Coll., Grayslake, Ill.; Ohio State Univ., Columbus. Center on Education and Training for Employment.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC. National Workplace Literacy Program.
PUB DATE	97
NOTE	113p.; For related documents, see CE 073 122-124.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications, Center on Education and Training for Employment, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090 (order no. LT73A: $25; set of four packages, LT73: $90).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; Adult Educators; Adult Students; Behavioral Objectives; *Educational Environment; Inservice Teacher Education; Instructional Materials; Learning Activities; Learning Modules; *Literacy Education; Needs Assessment; *Professional Development; Program Content; Program Design; Program Development; Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Student Characteristics; Teacher Characteristics; Teacher Competencies; *Teacher Qualifications; Teaching Guides; *Workplace Literacy

ABSTRACT

These three learning guides comprise one of four packages in the Workplace Literacy Teacher Training series that provides information and skills necessary for the user to become a successful instructor in an effective workplace literacy program. The guides in this package look at the unique environment and culture involved in providing education and training to adults in a workplace. Each guide consists of these components: introduction, objectives, list of activities to help meet the objectives, readings followed by questions for reflection, application activity, evaluation guidelines, and annotated bibliography. The first guide focuses on the workplace and how to design workplace literacy programs to fit its specific needs. It explains how such programs differ from other literacy programs, presents examples, and identifies factors in the workplace that must be considered in developing an appropriate literacy program. The characteristics of learners in such programs are addressed in the second guide. It describes characteristics of adult learners, provides information on how to develop a learning environment appropriate for those characteristics, and presents instructional strategies for serving the wide range of individuals within the adult population. The third guide looks at the role of the instructor. It presents the skills, qualities, and ethics of an effective workplace literacy instructor and helps the instructor analyze his or her readiness to assume the instructional role. (YLB)



ED 403 389

The Workplace

The Learner

The Instructor

Workplace Literacy Teacher Training

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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CENTER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT
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Workplace Literacy Teacher Training: The Context

This package contains the following learning guides:

- *The Context of Workplace Literacy: The Workplace*
- *The Context of Workplace Literacy: The Learner*
- *The Context of Workplace Literacy: The Instructor*

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The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Preface

When the College of Lake County workplace literacy program staff approached us about the possibility of developing some teacher training materials to enhance their programming, the timing was ideal. At the Center on Education and Training for Employment (CETE), we were just completing our second major multi-year National Workplace Literacy Program grant, complemented by ongoing work with a series of clients over the same period of years on refining systematic processes for assisting work-based learning.

A salient driving force—indeed, evolving into our passion—was the vision of how teachers trained in the synergistically combined processes of problem-based learning, metacognitive reflection, and learner generation of job-context curriculum could become the instruments of learners' capitalizing on their own expertise and potential. We were motivated to generalize beyond the College of Lake County's specific needs to capture this vision.

The proposed learning guides were divided up among seasoned staff for draft development. Then they were subjected to intensive review and enhancement by each of the content advisors (Johanna DeStefano, Susan Imel, and myself)—three individuals who had joined their diverse perspectives successfully over the years, evolving into a team with considerable expertise in workplace learning. Finally, the consistency and coherence of the materials was crafted by Lois Harrington with an unerring sense of the components of curriculum.

It was my pleasure to coordinate the contributions. I would like to express my appreciation on behalf of CETE to the College of Lake County for the farsighted thinking of its workplace literacy staff and for giving us the opportunity to stop and take stock of what we have learned for the purpose of sharing it.

Sandra G. Pritz
Curriculum Project Director
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Foreword

Ninety-five percent of the instructors in the College of Lake County's Community Education and Economic Development Division are part-time instructors. It is from this division pool of instructors that the National Workplace Literacy Program draws. Many of them have long-time teaching experience in classroom-based adult education—but usually no experience in the workplace setting or with outcome-based instruction. Thus, staff development for part-time instructors is an ongoing process. Even though an orientation to the program and a series of workshops effectively address some of their needs, more options for gaining workplace education knowledge is necessary to help the instructors make a successful transition into the workplace. Supplementing the more "traditional" forms of staff development with a series of self-study teacher training materials was the plan.

One of the main objectives of the National Workplace Literacy grant at the College of Lake County (CLC) is to provide adequate and appropriate staff development for workplace literacy instructors. In order to fulfill this objective, CLC worked in conjunction with the Center on Education and Training for Employment at The Ohio State University to develop this plan and offer an effective alternative approach to workplace literacy staff development.

The materials have been piloted by the CLC workplace instructors, and the feedback has been positive concerning their coverage of workplace content and context as well as their provision for a variety of professional development options. This model has allowed the instructors to enhance their professional skills and knowledge, to share their philosophies and ideas with grant staff and workplace personnel, to gain sufficient exposure to resources, and to improve the quality of instruction.

The National Workplace Literacy Program hopes that by making these packages available, other educational programs and/or businesses will be able to utilize and adapt the materials to fit their workplace literacy programs and to foster the growth of their instructors as professionals in a new and exciting field.

Mary Kay Gee, Director
National Workplace Literacy Project
College of Lake County

Introduction

Three elements provide the context for a workplace literacy program: the workplace in which the learners are employed, the learners, and the instructor. The quality of interaction between these elements will, in large part, determine the effectiveness of the program.

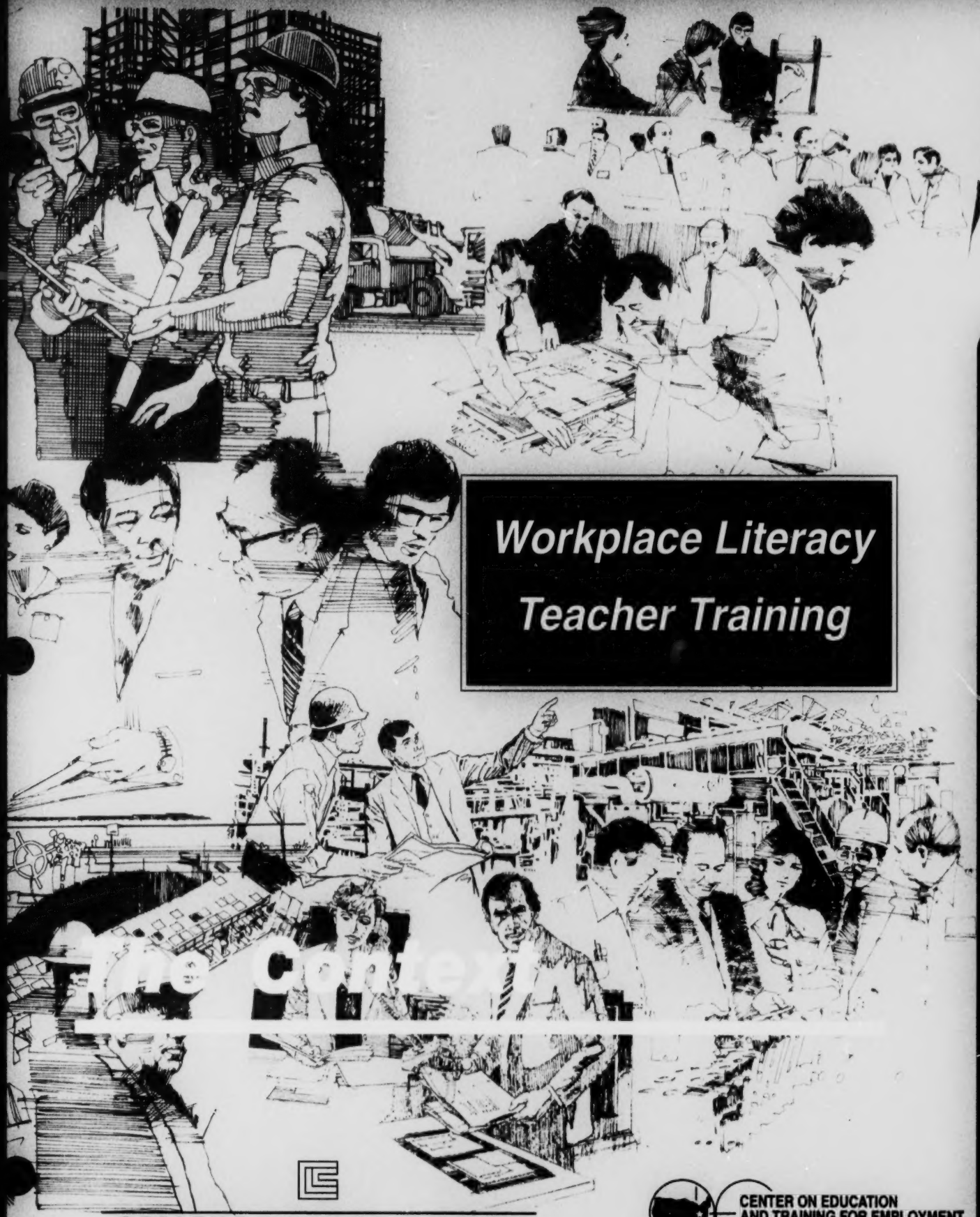
The first learning guide in this package focuses on the ***workplace*** and how to design workplace literacy programs to fit its specific needs. The guide explains how such programs differ from other literacy programs, presents examples of workplace literacy programs, and identifies the factors in the workplace that must be considered in developing an appropriate literacy program.

The second learning guide addresses the characteristics of ***learners*** in such programs. The characteristics of adult learners are described, and information is provided on how to develop a learning environment appropriate for those characteristics. Readings also present instructional strategies for serving the wide range of individuals within the adult population: both men and women, from various cultures, and with various abilities and disabilities.

The third learning guide looks at the role of the ***instructor***. It presents the skills, qualities, and ethics of an effective workplace literacy instructor and then helps the instructor analyze (and improve) his or her readiness to assume the instructional role.

Other packages in the Workplace Literacy Teacher Training series provide the additional information and skills you need to become a successful instructor in an effective workplace literacy program:

- The four learning guides in *The Foundations* package address the identification of business and industry needs related to the workplace literacy program, development of training plans and learning objectives, improvement of teaching effectiveness, and development of instructional resources appropriate for the workplace.
- The four learning guides in the *Strategies for Instruction* package focus on the skills at the heart of such programs—reading, communication, mathematics, and English as a second language—and present effective strategies for teaching these skills in the workplace context.
- The four learning guides in the *Strategies for Program Implementation* package provide guidance in managing instruction, assessing learner performance, individualizing instruction, and using tutoring and mentoring to enhance learners' literacy development.



Workplace Literacy Teacher Training

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The Context of Workplace Literacy
The Workplace

Introduction

Jobs today require higher levels of critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills as well as higher levels of basic skills (oral communications, math, reading, and writing). And, because 75 percent of the workers who will be employed in the year 2000 are already in the workforce, employers have an investment they can protect only by ensuring that their workers are able to adapt to new job requirements and duties.

Workplace literacy is the term used to describe programs that—

- are usually provided at the work site, although other locations may be used;
- are based on workplace materials utilizing a job context curriculum;
- are designed to upgrade the reading, writing, speaking, listening, math, and thinking skills workers need to perform job tasks; and
- usually involve cooperation between the employer or union and the provider of the program.

Workplace literacy programs constitute a type of adult literacy program. Other types are community literacy programs and workforce education programs. Community programs may have larger social goals than workplace literacy programs. Workforce education programs are those programs designed to prepare individuals for entry or re-entry into the workforce rather than to upgrade individuals in a particular workplace.[1]

Workplace literacy programs frequently are context-based, that is, basic skills are selected for instruction because they are foundational to job-related tasks. Research conducted shows that, although general basic skills training does not transfer to the workplace, basic skills taught in the context of the job do result in an improvement in general basic skills levels. Because an increasing number of jobs require higher-order thinking and broad problem-solving skills, many educators argue that this job-specific approach is too narrow; however, many companies are interested in the job-specific approach. It is possible to provide a blend of the two approaches as suitable to the company situation.

Companies vary in the goals and objectives they have for learning programs, depending on what is judged to be most important by those making the decisions. A continuum often exists with regard to the degree of work-relatedness of instruction. Employers may sponsor learning programs on site that are not considered workplace literacy programs, strictly speaking. For example some employers simply want to promote general learning. They operate on the basic

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1. E. N. Askov and B. Aderman, "Understanding the History and Definitions of Workplace Literacy," in *Basic Skills for the Workplace*, edited by M. C. Taylor, G. R. Lewe, and J. A. Draper (Toronto: Culture Concepts, 1991), p. 17. (ED 333 180)

principle that people will feel better about themselves and their company if they have the opportunity to learn under the company auspices, regardless of the topic. GED programs, English as a Second Language (ESL) for life skills, and adult basic education programs fall into this category on one end of the continuum. ESL programs related to work concepts and terminology fall more toward the middle of the continuum. Further along are the job-context programs structured around work tasks. Programs of this type are often selected by those who want to promote specific worker productivity gains and hope to see a relationship between learner progress and the company's "bottom line." Demands on the instructor (and the training required for the instructor) differ along the continuum. Regardless of where along the continuum a company's program falls, such benefits as worker satisfaction and higher productivity should be approached by program planners and instructors as complementary, not competing, options.

ISO 9000, Statistical Process Control (SPC), often now called Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), and Total Quality Management (TQM) are relatively new initiatives related to increased quality of products and services. Workers are being called upon to make decisions, often during production, that will affect the quality of the finished product. New skills are required to make those decisions. The widespread use of these quality initiatives has fueled an awareness of the need for workplace literacy programs.

Some companies in which you deliver a program may be unionized, while others may not. This is just one element of the culture of the workplace, the many ways in which a company's unique characteristics influence the work dynamic. Formal as well as informal "rules" of behavior and chains of command are important to know and follow to function successfully in that environment.

Providing education and training to adults at a work site offers a unique environment for individuals who may have very specific needs. This learning guide discusses workplace literacy and how it differs from other literacy programs, corporate culture, union expectations, and factors affecting the need for higher level skills.

Objectives

- Identify the key characteristics of workplace literacy programs, the main needs they fulfill, and the major skills employers want such programs to develop.
- Describe the impact on workplace literacy programs of such business initiatives as ISO 9000, TQM, SPC, and CQI.
- Identify strategies for securing support for your program from unions or from workers in a nonunion environment.
- Identify the ways in which corporate culture can affect workplace literacy programs (both positive and negative effects).

To Help You Meet the Objectives

- Study the material that follows:

  Reading 1: Workplace Literacy Programs

  Workplace Literacy: Lessons from Practice

  Reading 2: Impact of ISO 9000, SPC or CQI, and TQM on Workplace Literacy

  Reading 3: Worker-Centered Learning: A Union Guide to Workplace Literacy

  Reading 4: The Corporate Culture Climate at the Crossroads: Back to the Future

- Reflect on the questions posed after each reading. The questions are designed to help you clarify and extract meaning from the reading that can be helpfully applied. There are benefits to both individual and interactive reflection—
  - ~ As an individual, consider how you would apply the information either in the program to which you are already assigned or in a program to which you might be assigned.
  - ~ If you are able to discuss these questions with other instructors or program staff, try to get other perspectives on the reading. Compare notes on the ways the ideas can be and have been applied in their experience. If the experiences differ, help each other probe the possible reasons for the differences.
- Complete the Application Activity.
- Evaluate your own competencies using the Evaluation Guidelines. This is an opportunity to assess your own learning and identify any areas in which you feel less competent or confident. If indicated or desired, take advantage of the opportunity to review the related material in the Annotated Bibliography. You may also want to seek out a more experienced person who can be a mentor to you on this topic, helping you assess your competency and acting as a resource person.
- Ask your reviewer to evaluate your skills also. Be sure to note the input from the reviewer that can provide the basis for your further competency building.

To Help the Reviewer Guide and Evaluate Learner Performance

These learning guides have been designed to allow for maximum flexibility of use. For those individuals using them for professional development (without ties to a formal program), the guides allow for self-study. Such use may, however, limit the opportunity for interaction and practice in a group setting. Therefore, if learners are completing these guides in a group setting under your direction, it is strongly recommended that you identify such opportunities and capitalize upon them.

Reflection questions at the end of each Reading and an Application Activity and Evaluation Guidelines at the end of each learning guide provide opportunities for you, as a reviewer, to monitor learner progress and evaluate learner performance on the workplace literacy knowledge and skills being developed. However, your expectations should be based somewhat on the learner's background (e.g., previous instructional experience) and the learner's progress in the program. Individuals with previous experience as instructors in workplace literacy programs

should be expected to extend their thinking and activities beyond the level expected of those without such experience.

For example, if the learner is asked to "define company culture," individuals ***without*** instructional experience would be expected to respond solely on the basis of their reflections concerning the readings provided within the guide. The responses expected of individuals with instructional experience, however, should go beyond the readings, incorporating their real-world experiences as well. Likewise, as individuals complete more and more of the learning guides, their work should reflect that progress. Knowledge and skills gained in earlier guides should be ***integrated*** into their reflections and activities as they work through later guides.

Flexibility can also be provided concerning how the learner will demonstrate competency. At a minimum, the learner should submit ***written*** descriptions, definitions, and explanations to demonstrate successful completion of the Application Activity. These should be evaluated—by both you and the learner—using the criteria provided in the Evaluation Guidelines. If feasible, however, you should also arrange to meet with the learner to discuss his or her written documentation. At that time, you could also pose hypothetical or actual situations related to the skill criteria and ask the learner how he or she would handle those situations. Another possibility would be to ask individuals to perform the skill as part of a presentation or demonstration to others in the class or group.

It is also desirable that, whenever possible, you and the learner identify opportunities for expanding on the learning experiences presented in the guide—ways for the learner to apply the learning more deeply and broadly. The question, "What plans do you have for learning more about the skill covered in this guide?" could well be a standard one. In many cases, the learner can use his or her work in the Application Activity as a building block for further exploration.

In summary, the learning situation is not one in which strict criterion-referenced standards based on percentage attainment or mastery levels are suitable, nor would one mode of demonstration be feasible—or appropriate—for everyone. You and the learner should discuss and reach agreement in advance on the level of achievement expected and mode of demonstration to be used so as to create the optimal learning experience. The intent is for the learner's professional development to be competency-based, rigorous, and designed to motivate further learning, yet sensibly adapted to the situation and to the learner's needs and abilities. Hopefully, the learners will carry this flexible philosophy and approach into their own workplace literacy programs.

WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAMS
ERIC Digest No. 70 by S. Imel
Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1988 (ED 292 974)

Increasing the literacy rate of adult Americans has been the focus of national attention during the 1980s. Following President Reagan's announcement of the Adult Literacy Initiative in September 1983, many new groups and organizations joined those who had long been involved in efforts to reduce adult illiteracy.

During the first part of the decade, the focus was on strengthening literacy education programs through the recruitment of volunteers. The Coalition for Literacy, in conjunction with the American Association of Advertising Agencies, developed and operated a national public service advertising campaign designed to recruit volunteers to teach adults to read. The Business Council for Effective Literacy, formed by Harold W. McGraw early in 1984, encouraged businesses to support adult literacy programs in their local communities. Many communities and several states developed coalitions to facilitate communication and collaboration among literacy education providers.

Although these early efforts are continuing, the focus in adult literacy education has changed during the latter part of the decade. Job-related or workplace literacy has become a national priority. This ERIC Digest examines different aspects of workplace literacy including the need for it, how it differs from general literacy, literacy skills needed for the workplace, patterns in practices and approaches, and resources for program development.

The Need for Workplace Literacy Programs

The impact of adult illiteracy on private industry is increasingly visible. Historically, the severity of the adult illiteracy problem was obscured by adequate employment for adults with little or no literacy skills, simpler definitions of literacy, faulty survey methods, and a stigma that kept (and still keeps) many people from admitting illiteracy or seeking help. Now, however, business and industry face a growing awareness of the extent—and costs—of illiteracy in the work force, as increasing technological advances and foreign competition raise workers' basic skill requirements. As a result, companies are finding that many more employees are functionally illiterate than those who fit former stereotyped notions (Fields, Hull, and Sechler 1987).

Demographic factors and changes in jobs are also creating a need for workplace literacy programs. Bureau of Labor Statistics' projections of labor force growth to the year 2000 suggest that there will be "sharply slower growth in the labor force, particularly among younger workers. . . [and] that the people who will be entering the labor force in the years ahead may not have the skills that employers need" (Riche 1988, p. 34). According to the report WORKFORCE 2000 (Johnston 1987), new jobs in the service industries—where most of the job growth is projected to occur—will demand much higher skill levels than the jobs of today. Very few new jobs will be created for those who cannot read, follow directions, and use mathematics. Thus, new entrants as well as established workers will need literacy training in order for companies to remain productive and competitive.

Workplace Literacy Versus General Literacy

Workplace literacy and general literacy differ in purpose (Mathes 1987). In order to enter and thrive in the work force, individuals must possess certain basic literacy skills. The literacy skills needed to perform work successfully are commonly referred to as job-related or workplace literacy skills. Most employers are interested in a range of skills beyond the traditional 3 Rs because today's workplace requires not only the ability to read, write, and compute, but also the ability to use these skills in problem solving (Gainer 1988, Sticht and Mikulecky 1984). In studies of workplace literacy

training, Mikulecky and others (1987) found that the types of reading and writing on the job differ considerably from the literacy activities of students in schools. They also noted that the majority of reading and writing activities in which adults engage is job-related. They point out that two factors are important in understanding the nature of workplace literacy: (1) the time spent in reading and writing averages two hours per day and (2) the difficulty level of the materials is high, ranging from 10th- to 12th-grade level or higher.

Workplace Literacy Requirements

What are the literacy or basic skills individuals need in order to succeed in the workplace? A number of recent studies have investigated this question and developed lists of skills. In 1983 the Center for Public Resources formulated a basic skills list that identified job-related basic competencies in the following areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, scientific, and reasoning (Henry and Raymond 1983).

Researchers at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education compiled a list of skills needed by employees to enter and progress on the job. The list, which was verified by company and union trainers, consisted of the following skill categories: mathematics, reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Hull and Sechler 1987). Some skills on the list (e.g., "completes forms and applications") were only considered necessary for entering the job whereas others (e.g., "estimates areas or values") were listed as skills needed to progress in the workplace. Several skills (e.g., "handwriting is legible," "signs forms appropriately," and "speaks face to face") were considered necessary for both entering and progressing on the job.

As a part of its project "Best Practices: What Works in Training and Development," the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) is studying basic skill requirements of the workplace. By focusing on the question "What are the skills employers want?," ASTD (Gainer 1988) has developed the following four categories of skills: (1) individual competence including communication, comprehension, computation, and culture; (2) personal reliability including personal management, ethics, and vocabulary maturity; (3) economic adaptability including problem solving, learning, employability, and career development; and (4) group and organizational effectiveness including interpersonal skills, organizational skills, negotiation skills, creativity, and leadership. According to Gainer (1988) the first three categories of skills "focus on individual development—the set of skills people need to be able to make successful transitions into and within the workplace. . . . But [the fourth category consists of] essentials from the employer perspective" (p. 6). When compared to the lists developed by Henry and Raymond (1983) and Hull and Sechler (1987), the ASTD list reflects the fact that the range of skills needed by workers is expanding.

Patterns in Practices and Approaches

Because of their diversity, workplace literacy programs are difficult to characterize. However, seven case studies based on visits to industry-based programs by researchers at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education revealed the following general patterns in the establishment and operation of workplace literacy programs:

- Industry-based literacy approaches can be divided into two groups: (1) pre-1980, viewed primarily as traditional benefits for the employee, and (2) post-1980, viewed primarily as instruments for achieving the company's advanced technology goals.
- Traditional programs were generally initiated in an era of company prosperity and security; new literacy skills programs were initiated during an era of foreign competition and rapid technological change.
- In some cases, new basic skills programs were initiated after it was discovered that employees lacked the basic skills with which to acquire more technical skills.
- Diplomas or their equivalents are rapidly becoming the new standard entry-level requirement for industry.
- Program evaluation tended to be informal and based on feedback from instructor, employee, and supervisor.
- Most industry-based literacy training occurs on the company site, partly for employee convenience, and partly because many employees find schoolroom environments inhibiting (Fields, Hull, and Sechler 1987, pp. 40-41).

Resources for Program Development

Because of the interest in workplace literacy programs, a number of publications that can be used to guide program development are beginning to appear in the literature. The following items provide information on this aspect of workplace literacy.

- *Adult Literacy: Industry-Based Training* (Fields, Hull, and Sechler 1987) contains seven case studies of industry-based literacy programs. A series of recommendations to help training planners and instructors meet the expanding need for workplace literacy programs is included.
- *Job-Related Basic Skills: A Guide for Planners of Employee Programs* (Business Council for Effective Literacy 1987) is a step-by-step guide to planning and implementing an effective job-related employee basic skills program. Part One provides general principles to guide the effort. Part Two discusses 12 basic steps to take in deciding on the purpose and content of a basic skills program, implementing it, and ensuring its effectiveness. Part three considers some special issues related to program development. Fourteen illustrative cases are provided throughout the guide.
- *Guidelines for Developing an Educational Program for Worker Literacy* (Massachusetts State Executive Department 1987) contains guidelines developed to assist Massachusetts Private Industry Councils, social agencies, unions, businesses, and education providers in designing literacy programs appropriate to the workplace. The bulk of the paper provides suggestions for program development.
- *Let ABE Do It: Basic Education in the Workplace* (Mark 1987) lists business, industry, union, and Job Training Partnership Act-supported efforts to provide public and private employees, as well as some prospective employees, with the basic literacy skills they need to perform in the workplace. Information given for each program includes title, provider, address, contact person, telephone number, and description of program.

For More Information

Business Council for Effective Literacy. *Job-Related Skills: A Guide for Planners of Employee Programs.* BCEL Bulletin No. 2. New York, NY: BCEL, June 1987. (ED 285 974)

Fields, E.; Hull, W.; and Sechler, J. *Adult Literacy: Industry-Based Training Programs.* Research and Development Series No. 265C. Columbus, OH: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1987. (ED 284 981)

Gainer, L. *ASTD Update: Basic Skills.* Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development, February 1988. (ED 291 882)

Henry, J. F., and Raymond, S. *Basic Skills in the U.S. Work Force: The Contrasting Perception of Business, Labor, and Public Education.* New York, NY: Center for Public Resources, November 1982. (ED 229 456)

Hull, W., and Sechler, J. *Adult Literacy: Skills for the American Work Force.* Research and Development Series No. 265B. Columbus, OH: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1987. (ED 284 980)

Johnston, W. B. *Workforce 2000—Work and Workers for the 21st Century.* Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute, 1987. (ED 290 887)

Mark, J. L., ed. *Let ABE Do It: Basic Education in the Workplace.* Washington, DC: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, 1987. (ED 288 080)

Massachusetts State Executive Department. *Guidelines for Developing an Educational Program for Worker Literacy.* Boston, MA: MSED, 1987. (ED 284 071)

Mathes, D. *Workplace Literacy.* Unpublished paper, November 1987.

Mikulecky, L. et al. *Training for Job Literacy Demands: What Research Applies to Practice.* University Park, PA: Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Pennsylvania State University, 1987. (ED 284 968)

Riche, M. F. "America's New Workers." *American Demographics* v10/n2 (February 1988): 34-41.

Sticht, T., and Mikulecky, L. *Job-Related Basic Skills: Cases and Conclusions.* Information Series No. 285. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1984. (ED 246 312)

WORKPLACE LITERACY: LESSONS FROM PRACTICE
ERIC Digest No. 131 by S. Kerka and S. Imel
Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1993 (ED 354 416)

The fifth national education goal established in September 1990 states that "by the year 2000 every adult American will be literate and will possess the skills necessary to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (National Governors' Association 1990, p. 11). To reach the goal of universal literacy in the United States, five objectives were established. The second of these objectives—all workers will have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to adapt to constantly emerging new technologies, new work methods, and new markets through public and private vocational, technical, workplace, or other innovative programs—is the focus of this *Digest*. Designed to furnish readers with information that can be used in implementing goal five, it provides practice illustrations gleaned from workplace literacy programs. Following a brief overview of the status of workplace literacy, project highlights that are potentially useful to program developers are described. It concludes with resources that can be consulted for additional information.

The Status of Workplace Literacy

During the 1980s, workplace literacy was catapulted to national prominence by the perception that, as a nation, the United States was losing its competitive edge. Viewed by many as a solution to the nation's economic woes, the area of workplace literacy became a growth industry within the education and training community. Workplace literacy programs were developed with the goal of raising workers' basic skills so that they could perform more effectively in increasingly complex work environments. Many diverse strategies and programs have been implemented to address the need for a better educated work force (Imel 1992).

Because of the nature of workplace literacy programs, there are no accurate estimates of numbers of programs and participants. Since 1988, however, more than 200 programs have been funded under the U.S. Department of Education's National Workplace Literacy Program, including several that are statewide initiatives.

Due to increased federal and state support for workplace literacy efforts, more project descriptions are available. Although workplace literacy programs must be customized to a particular work environment and workplace culture, the program descriptions provided here have special features that illustrate innovative approaches to basic skills development and/or they encountered particular problems that provide useful information to program developers about what works and doesn't work (Imel and Kerka 1992).

Program Descriptions

SALSA (Southwest Advanced Learning System for Adults) (1991). Project SALSA capitalized on several trends in its unique approach to workplace literacy: home computer use, family literacy, and productivity improvement through human resource development. Building on the known link between computer-assisted instruction and literacy enhancement, Macintosh microcomputers were placed in the homes of Motorola production line employees in Arizona. Following 14 hours of training, employees used home computers to access structured lessons in reading, language, math, spelling, and critical thinking available through NovaNet, a software library at the University of Illinois. Recommendations include the following: expert trainers to provide system training at a pace that ensures understanding; troubleshooters/technical support staff who are local and accessible; a shared-cost purchase program to enable employees to buy the microcomputers in their homes; and a software library to ensure that computer use and learning continue after the project ends.

Workplace Literacy Instruction for College Preparation of Health Care Workers (Perin 1992). The shortage of health care workers for technical positions prompted this program designed to prepare health care paraprofessionals for college programs and advancement to these positions. Although the paraprofessionals had high school

diplomas or equivalencies, their low literacy skills prevented them from entering college programs. The 153 participants were taught in union facilities 6 hours per week for 8 months, on their own time. The curriculum, based on literacy task analysis of college health occupations programs and textbooks, included reading, writing, and math directly related to health care job practices. Collaborative learning, videotaped biology and chemistry lectures for independent study, and college preparatory educational counseling were also featured. A committee of student representatives provided ongoing feedback about participant concerns and reactions. Recommendations were as follows: initial screening for reading and math as well as writing, then individualized instruction to focus on an individual's weaker areas; pre- and post-program assessment of career-related motivation and career knowledge; a "tryout" orientation to college preparation to help people determine their motivation for a long-term program; accommodation for those who find instruction too fast paced (for example, peer tutoring); college placement tests taken immediately after program completion to maximize the effects of the program; and ongoing support (such as tutoring and counseling) provided throughout college.

Workers' Education for Skills Training (O'Gorman 1991). The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) adapted Ontario Federation of Labour's BEST program to meet the special needs of low-literate workers in the province. W.E.S.T. (Workers' Education for Skills Training) was designed to address the following needs: more SFL members in the service sector than in manufacturing, the geographic isolation of sites, and the English as a second language (ESL) needs of Canada Natives. Based on the premise of literacy for empowerment, W.E.S.T. focused on participatory learning. Thirteen workers, from six companies whose workers were SFL members, attended a 2-week residential training program for course leaders. They returned to their worksites certified to implement programs, which featured cooperative learning, self-pacing, confidentiality in regard to individuals' skill levels, and curriculum materials created and developed by participants. Recommendations include the following: programs should begin with the premise that low-literate persons already know how to learn for they have used coping skills for years; training manuals should include more cross-cultural materials; course leaders should have English communication skills and perhaps should know other languages in programs featuring ESL, and they should respect other cultures and have a collective leadership style; and rigorous, documented evaluation of a program's effects on skill levels is needed to demonstrate its worth to employers.

Competitive Skills Project (1992). Workers with limited written and verbal skills cannot participate fully in total quality management (TQM), a concept being used in business and industry to ensure continuous attention to the quality of products and services by all members of an organization. Thus, the goal of the Competitive Skills Project (CSP) was to improve chemical industry workers' skills for implementing quality principles and technological innovation. Needs assessments, literacy audits, and task analyses were used to develop context-based customized curricula in three areas: language-based literacy (e.g., understanding instructions, following directions), numerical literacy (e.g., understanding specifications, implementing statistical techniques), and basic computer literacy. The following recommendations were made: consistency of project staff and business partners is critical to effectiveness; cooperation of line supervisors should be ensured in such areas as release time for class attendance and acceptance of TQM input from newly trained employees; and formulation of customized curricula is an ongoing process requiring continual modification.

Rural Workplace Literacy Project (1991). California agribusinesses deal with increasingly complex agricultural technology and an emphasis on quality control in production, but many of their workers are temporary, nonnative English speakers. The Rural Workplace Literacy Project provided literacy classes at 15 worksites to 264 migrant and seasonal farmworkers, the majority with limited English proficiency and less than a sixth-grade education. A core curriculum for agriculture was tailored to each site and included whole language, cooperative learning, and problem-posing approaches. The curriculum emphasized communications in the workplace and life skills for entering mainstream U.S. society. Recommendations were as follows: a core curriculum should emphasize math and a broad matrix of communication skills;

employers need to be informed about the benefits and implications of workplace literacy, particularly the connection to productivity; the diversity of levels and objectives among students could be addressed with a variety of peer support techniques (tutoring, small practice groups, discussion circles, homework groups), giving workers an opportunity to practice teamwork skills; and individualized educational plans should be practical instruments expressing reasonable learning expectations.

Resources for Further Information

A number of groups and organizations provide information on workplace literacy. Two that are national in scope are described here.

Adult Learning and Literacy Clearinghouse, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S. W., Mary E. Switzer Building, Room 4428, Washington, DC 20202-7240; (202) 732-2396. Provides a variety of information on workplace literacy including two publications featuring the National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLP): *Workplace Education: Voices from the Field* (1992) and *Workplace Literacy: Reshaping the American Work-force* (1992). The latter is a source of information on exemplary projects funded by the NWLP.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Center on Education and Training for Employment (CETE), 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090; (614) 292-4353; (800) 848-4815. Free publications on the topic of workplace literacy include *Digests* and *Trends and Issues Alerts*. Also developed *Workplace Literacy: A Guide to the Literature and Resources*, which includes an extensive annotated bibliography of workplace literacy resources and program descriptions. (Available as IN 352 from CETE's Publication Office for $7.00 plus $3.50 shipping and handling.) Provides information services including searches of the ERIC database, which contains many project and program descriptions.

References

Competitive Skills Project. Final Report. Torrance, CA: El Camino College, 1992. (ED 348 489)

Imel, S. *Workplace Literacy: An Update.* Trends and Issues Alert. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1992. (ED 346 321).

Imel, S., and Kerka, S. *Workplace Literacy: A Guide to the Literature and Resources.* Information Series No. 352. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1992. (ED 354 388)

National Governors' Association. *Educating America: State Strategies for Achieving the National Education Goals. Report of the Task Force on Education.* Washington, DC: NGA, 1990.

O'Gorman, L. A. S. *W.E.S.T. Pilot Project.* Final Report. Regina: Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, 1991. (ED 337 623)

Perin, D. *Workplace Literacy Instruction for College Preparation of Health Care Workers.* Final Evaluation Report. New York, NY: Center for Advanced Study in Education/Institute for Occupational Research and Development/City University of New York, 1992. (ED 346 264)

Rural Workplace Literacy Project: Northern California. Final Report. Santa Rosa, CA: California Human Development Corporation, 1991. (ED 340 891)

SALSA (Southwest Advanced Learning System for Adults) Pilot Project Research Report. Phoenix, AZ: Rio Salado Community College, 1991. (ED 348 521)

Reflection on Reading 1

- You have read why workplace literacy programs, in general, are needed. What do you consider are the 2-3 main needs to be fulfilled by workplace literacy programs?

  1.

  2

  3.

- You have read how workplace literacy programs differ from other literacy programs. What characteristics define a program as a workplace literacy program?

Topics to Consider	General Literacy	Workplace Literacy
Teaching methodology:		
Materials:		
Students (diversity):		
Assessment and evaluation:		

- What are the four categories of skills according to Gainer? How does you program address skills in these four categories?

Gainer's Skills Categories	Your Program

Activities: Reading 1

- Explain to a general literacy adult educator the definition, components, types of materials, form of delivery, and evaluation of workplace literacy.

- Create a brochure illustrating and/or explaining workplace literacy.

Impact of ISO 9000, SPC or CQI, and TQM on Workplace Literacy

Increased global competitiveness and the creation of the European Common Market have caused U.S. business to institute procedures to ensure the manufacture of quality products as well as the acceptance of products. ISO 9000, Total Quality Management (TQM), and Statistical Process Control (SPC), often now called Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), are initiatives related to increased quality of products and services. Workers are being called upon to make decisions, often during production, that will affect the quality of the finished product. New skills are required to make those decisions.

TQM. W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran, and Philip B. Crosby are major TQM (total quality management) theorists. Deming stresses "the importance of market research, the need to control variation in all processes, and the importance of working closely with suppliers . . . ." Juran stresses continual improvement in quality; upper management using hands-on leadership in establishing such things as policies, goals, and plans; and training in quality for the management team in addition to the quality department. Crosby "defines quality as conformance to requirements" and that the performance standards (requirements) are the absence of defects.[1]

Deming analyzed the characteristics which, if present, create an environment conducive to TQM. His six basic principles of a quality environment are as follows:

- Quality is defined by the customer and is a result of improving the process.
- Understanding and reducing variation in every process is a must.
- Long-lasting quality improvements must originate with top management's commitment to improvement.
- Change and improvement must be continuous and involve every member of the organization.
- Education and training of all employees is a prerequisite for constant improvement.
- Individual performance ranking schemes including rewards serve to impede natural initiative and fracture the team philosophy.[2]

SPC or CQI. SPC (statistical process control) is a set of procedures that use statistical techniques to help ensure quality. SPC is a means by which production-floor operators can control product quality. However, it also requires operators to determine when and what type of corrective action is needed. SPC also requires workers to use some mathematics, have charting capabilities, and understand the math processes and measures underlying their job.

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1. D. D. Bragg, *Implementing Tech Prep: A Guide to Planning a Quality Initiative* (Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California at Berkeley, 1992), pp. 6-4 to 6-6. (ED 356 313)

2. Ibid., p. 6-8.

ISO 9000. In 1987, an international set of standards, ISO 9000, was developed by the International Organization for Standardization. The purpose of the ISO 9000 standards is also to ensure quality. The standards consist of 20 interrelated elements: management responsibility; quality system; contract review; design control; document control; purchasing; product supplies; product identification and traceability; process control; inspection and testing; inspection, measuring, and test equipment; inspection and test status; control of non-conforming product; corrective action; handling, storage, packing, and delivery; quality records; internal quality audits; training; servicing; and statistical techniques.[3] ISO 9000 does not specify how quality is to be achieved but does ensure that the processes needed are in place, functioning, and documented.

To gain ISO 9000 certification from an auditor, a company must expend not only time (perhaps years) but also money (typically $100,000 for a manufacturing plant with 300 employees) learning how to document its own procedures, which throws a spotlight on the procedures. Many companies are willing to undergo the disruption and expense, however, because ISO 9000 is a virtual requirement to trade in the European Common Market and is widely demanded by customers elsewhere; thus, it is perceived as a competitive advantage.

3. R. G. Clery, "ISO 9000 Quality Systems: Application to Higher Education" (Unpublished report, October 4, 1993). (ED 363 163)

Reflection on Reading 2

- What is the goal of each of these initiatives: ISO 9000, SPC/CQI, and TQM? How does each initiative impact workers?

1. ISO 9000

Goal: _____

_____

_____

Impact: _____

_____

_____

2. SPC

Goal: _____

_____

_____

Impact: _____

_____

_____

3. TQM

Goal: _____

_____

_____

Impact: _____

_____

_____

- Why are companies willing to undergo the time and expense required to gain ISO 9000 certification?

Activities: Reading 2

- Visit a business in the area, and ask a worker to describe his/her job and explain his/her daily job tasks (what is needed for ISO 9000 certification).
- Contact a human resource manager and find out what initiatives the company is using. Write a brief summary.
- Create a list that matches basic skills to a work initiative.

Work Initiative	Basic Skills

WORKER-CENTERED LEARNING: A UNION GUIDE TO WORKPLACE LITERACY
by A. R. Sarmiento and A. Kay, 7-16
Washington, DC: AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute, 1990 (ED 338 863)

Agenda for a Changing Workplace

In today's workplaces, change is often unexpected, unavoidable, and threatening. Planning for change is one way unions can help control the impact on their members. In developing their agenda for changing workplace, many unions look to their established labor-management relationships. Working together as equals, unions and employers have been able to plan for change and reduce or eliminate its harmful effects. A worker education strategy that includes workplace literacy is frequently an important part of that agenda for change.

Unions Respond to Change in the Workplace

Finding solutions to changing workplace needs has always been a priority for the American labor movement. In a constantly changing work environment, unions have sought from their earliest days to harness the benefits of change for their members. Over the years, unions led their members through the transition from an economy based on small craft shops to the complex industrial base of the twentieth century. They saw to it that their members got the education and training they needed for changing jobs, and they exercised the leadership of this highly skilled workforce to improve living standards and working conditions.

Today the pace of change is accelerating. Unions are constantly reviewing and revising their plans for serving their members in a changing work environment. As always, education and training can be a key part of unions' broad agenda for assisting members in responding to change.

The collective bargaining relationships that unions have established with their employers enable workers and their employers to come together to discuss today's new workplace needs. These relationships—and other established labor-management structures—provide an appropriate forum for responding to the complex workplace changes in today's economy.

As AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland described the trend several years ago in remarks to an AFL-CIO Training and Education Conference—

> Unions will be going to the bargaining table to negotiate learning programs and learning time, along with work time.

The joint problem-solving mechanism of collective bargaining gives unions an equal voice with employers in addressing workplace concerns. With joint problem-solving, unions contribute as equal partners with employers in finding answers to their shared problems. By bringing workers' views to the table—through their union—the process supports the principle of democracy in the workplace.

Our Broad Strategy for Change Is Threefold

Any planning for change in the workplace needs to recognize at least three factors that affect how work gets down in any industry.

1. *equipment*—the tools, materials, and technology that are made available to help accomplish work; the physical environment of the job.
2. *work processes*—the way work is structured and jobs are designed to support the accomplishment of desired tasks.
3. *worker skills*—the education or training that will enable workers to perform their jobs effectively.

Changes in any one of these interconnected factors has an impact on the others. Take new technology as an example. A strategy for introducing high-tech tools can't ignore any of the three work factors. For each factor, the strategy should seek to fit the new work situation to workers' needs—not simply to help workers adapt to the new tools. For instance, is the new equipment designed so workers can perform their jobs comfortably, safely, and effectively? Will job responsibilities, and therefore job classifications, need to be redrawn? Will workers have access to the training they want to fully understand and use the new equipment?

The foundation for worker skills are the basic skills we refer to as workplace literacy. Your union's activities in workplace literacy can effectively address your members' changing skill needs. In this way, your literacy efforts can support your broader strategy for change in the workplace. That's why literacy programs are a key item on our larger agenda for workplace change.

> *As a union negotiator I know that our wage scale and standard of living are dependent on . . . modernization . . . . What is not so evident is the need for an allocation of investment capital not just to capital stock, but, most importantly, to human capital; i.e., human resources.*
>
> *Lynn R. Williams, President*
> *United Steelworkers of America*
> *Testimony to House Ways and Means Committee*
> *October 25, 1989*

Preparing for Change Is a Joint Concern

Employers and unions each have vital interests that bring them to the table to plan for change in the workplace. Employers want a productive, profitable operation (or, in the public sector, a cost-effective one). Unions want to serve workers' needs. Ideally, both goals can be met when both sides anticipate change and prepare for it together.

Unions can help employers plan their response to new factors in the workplace. How will new services or product lines affect the equipment that workers use in their jobs? How might jobs be redesigned to make the best use of workers' existing skills? What kinds of training are needed to update employees' skills?

To bring their long-term organizational plans and strategies to life, employers need to enlist the help of their workers, through their unions. An employer who's serious about planning for change must share its long-term goals with the union. When the union has early access to this information, workers can contribute to the planning process and can help develop a response to change that both sides can live with.

For employers, involving union representation in the planning process is good management. It can minimize disruption and productivity losses by involving the affected workers through their union.

For your union, an agenda for change can directly support your fundamental mission of service to your members. Unions are using the forum of labor-management relations to protect their members' employment rights in the face of a changing work environment. These protections extend across all three aspects of work—the physical equipment, the content of workers' jobs, and the skills they use in their work.

. . . American labor unions have always had education and training programs as part of their broad agenda. From the days of the early craft guilds, when one generation of workers trained the next, unions have understood that maintaining a highly trained workforce is a source of labor's strength. Today labor unions are exploring new avenues for education and training, in keeping with the fast pace of change in our work sites.

This Agenda Needs Support from Public Policy

Our labor-management initiatives alone won't provide the relief our members seek in a changing work environment. These efforts can be successful only when public policies support the needs of American's workers in a changing economy. Those policies include trade, tax, and capital investment—investment in both capital equipment and "human capital."

Developing our nation's human resources will require a strong public commitment to education and training. Privately funded programs in the workplace can't replace the publicly funded education and training systems. The two must go hand in hand.

So, while labor's strategy for workplace change will naturally draw on the labor-management mechanisms we've described here, unions have a continuing role to play as advocates of effective public investments as well.

Negotiated Responses to Change

Unions have devised creative solutions jointly with management to address members' needs in a changing workplace:

- new technology

  Advance notice of new equipment or technology is now required under many union contracts. With advance notice, unions can work with management to cushion the impact of the new equipment on members' jobs.

- job content

  A number of unions have established the right to negotiate not only new job classifications but also the qualifications required for those jobs. When unions take the lead on these issues, job content can be determined on the basis of their members' first-hand knowledge of workplace needs.

- advancement opportunity

  As work processes change, some unions have established new lines of promotion for their members. These career ladders open new avenues for advancement with existing employers. Equally important is posting job openings so members are fully informed of advancement opportunities.

Unions' Stake in Education and Literacy

A union-sponsored education or training program that includes literacy can be a key part of your union's broader agenda for responding to change in the workplace. It can add significantly to the lineup of services you offer your members. Because your union represents the interests of the learners (your members), your union is the natural organization to sponsor such a program. You won't want to participate in a poorly designed program, though; your members and the union can lose more than they gain.

Worker Education Promotes Our Broader Objectives

Education and training—including literacy programs—are key ingredients in your union's broad strategy for helping your members deal with changes in the workplace. What's equally true is that education and training help serve your members and strengthen your union.

A union-sponsored education or training program that includes basic literacy skills can help you achieve many of labor's basic workplace objectives:

1. *protecting your members' employment security*

   An example is the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), whose members have faced new drivers' license tests in order to keep their jobs as bus drivers. The tests were mandated under federal legislation setting national standards for commercial driver licenses. The ATU took steps to help its members prepare for the exams. A union-developed study guide and tapes have

helped members improve their basic reading and test-taking skills as well as review driving requirements.

2. *increasing your members' job advancement opportunities with their employer*

   The Bakery Workers (at Nabisco) and Machinists (at Boeing) are among the unions that have negotiated new career paths so members can take advantage of job restructuring and related training to advance in their careers.

3. *advancing the safety and health of your members in their workplace*

   Through its asbestos abatement and hazardous waste removal training program, the Laborers Union has enabled members to qualify for new jobs, while protecting the health of its members and the public.

4. *expanding opportunities for quality education*

   The American Federation of Teachers, together with the AFL-CIO and other affiliates, has been a leader in advocating quality education at the primary, secondary, and postsecondary levels.

5. *reaching out to new members*

   Education and career advancement were key issues for District Council 37, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) when the union organized New York City hospital workers in the late 1960s. The result was the establishment of educational benefits for workers covered by AFSCME's collective bargaining agreements with the city. That education program continues as one of the labor movement's largest.

6. *serving members' diverse educational needs*

   Responding to members' interest in educational and self-improvement classes, the Steelworkers created "self-interest classes" for workers at Ohio Steel Tube. The children of union members got their own special classes as part of the wide-ranging joint program that the United Auto Workers have developed with Chrysler in Delaware. Citizenship and English language courses have been among the special classes available to recent immigrants through the Labor Immigrant Assistance Project sponsored by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

> *"What the union is doing is great. It's giving every employee the opportunity of bettering themselves."*
>
> Teacher aid enrolled in a union-sponsored college degree program
>
> *"I would never in a million years have gone back to school . . . I owe it all to the union."*
>
> Sewage treatment worker enrolled in a GED program sponsored by his union

Unions Should Sponsor These Programs

Certainly literacy programs, as part of a broader education and training effort, can help you further your union's objectives in the ways we've just described. But those programs need to carry your union's imprint. We believe unions should sponsor those programs themselves. Unions are the most appropriate organizations to run learning programs for their members. (See the box on the next page.)

Even when the program has employer involvement and support, the union is still the best choice to sponsor the program. The union is the one organization that represents the potential learners, and it's uniquely positioned to look after their interests. It's an organization that the workers have elected themselves, and they trust it to make decisions on their behalf. That's why many of the most successful programs are operated by unions on behalf of their members—even programs that receive financial support from employers. Those employers recognize that the union can make the program succeed.

As the sponsor of a program, you have a variety of options as to what your union's role will be. . . your options can include hiring your own teachers and operating the program yourself, entering into agreements with local schools or community groups, or participating in joint labor-management programs where the union is an equal partner with the employer. You'll have to decide which approach is most appropriate for your union. But no matter which approach you choose, the union needs to be in a position to plan and oversee the program from start to finish.

Why Unions Should Provide Education and Training Themselves

- Workers go to their union when they need help. Naturally, they look to you for advice and assistance on job training and career advancement matters.
- Your members know the union represents their interests unconditionally. That representation is guaranteed by the contract and law. At the same time, they also know that their employer will always be evaluating them for their job performance and productivity. Your members will be more comfortable in an education or training program that's not identified with their supervisors.
- Workers want their employer to judge them solely by their work performance. Having an education program sponsored only by the employer can confuse that evaluation process.
- You know your members and communicate well with them. Your members know they can talk freely with their union about their educational needs and shortcomings.
- You know their jobs and understand the changes that occur in their worksites.
- You know how to involve learners—your members—in designing the kinds of programs they want and need.
- Your members will be reluctant to participate in a program without their union's endorsement. They trust your judgment.

Education Isn't Just About Schools

Why is education an issue for the workplace? Why not just improve the schools?

Schools can't handle the vast needs of workers in a changing workplace. First, three-quarters of the people who will be working in the year 2000 are already out of school. Most of them are already in the workforce, and it's there that they'll confront their need for further education and training. Unions and employers have a responsibility to reach out and serve adults who are no longer in school.

This doesn't mean that classes must be job-related or that they must be held at work. What it does mean is that the workplace is an ideal place to reach adults who want to continue to add to their skills and knowledge. Unions (and employers) are in a good position to do that.

Second, our existing adult education system isn't prepared to respond to the changing skill needs in the workplace. Adult education is seriously underfunded . . . [with] the resources to serve only a tiny fraction of the adults who need basic skills assistance. Most adult education courses are oriented to the traditional high school curriculum or to preparation for a high school equivalency degree. But the basic reading, writing, and math skills taught in school are very different from the basic skills workers use on the job, according to several studies. Moreover, many of the workers in search of new skills already have their high school degrees. It's no wonder then that the dropout rate from the traditional adult education programs is extremely high. Workers often don't find what they're looking for. With some exceptions, these programs tend to have little connection to the workplace basic skills that workers seek.

Similarly, volunteer-based literacy programs aren't generally equipped to help workers adapt to changing workplace requirements. Recent visibility in the media has raised expectations about what the volunteer movement can accomplish, and these programs are striving hard to keep pace with that need. Unfortunately, though, they are often overtaxed by a lack of resources and are largely inexperienced with education and training for the workplace.

Programs based in the workplace have another advantage: learners who share similar job experiences support one another. Their group experience

reinforces learning. It's also a living model for group problem-solving.

Workplace Literacy Initiatives Are Timely

The heightened public interest in workplace literacy gives a special timeliness to unions' initiatives in worker education. So does the widespread national concern about maintaining a skilled and competitive workforce in a changing economy. The public is now more aware that education and training should be a lifelong process, that we need opportunities to continually update our knowledge and skills. This trend has focused new attention on workers' skills. There's a growing general understanding that education and training programs based in the workplace can help us keep in step with a changing economy and society.

But employers for the most part have been unwilling to take a leadership role in responding to changing skill needs in the workplace. They simply aren't making the necessary investments in worker training and education. The initiative in establishing or expanding these programs must often be assumed by the union if workers' skills are to be kept current.

Recent national attention on workplace literacy puts unions in a stronger position to leverage employer support for new or broader programs. There is a growing public expectation that employers have a responsibility for keeping their workers' skills up to date. The expectation is reinforced by groups such as the federally appointed Commission on Workforce Quality and Labor Market Efficiency, which recently added its voice to those advocating greater employer investments in training. Even some prominent employer associations agree. In this climate, employers are likely to be more receptive to education and training initiatives from unions.

Literacy Is No Cure-All, Though

Like some employee assistance programs that appear to be well-intentioned, education and training programs—and especially literacy programs—can be the vehicle for policies that run contrary to the best interests of workers and their unions. As a union leader, you'll want to be careful in selecting and recommending the specific approaches that will be used. If the employer attempts to establish a workplace literacy program that doesn't meet your members' needs, why would you give the union's endorsement? Your members will want you to look after their interests. The employer will need to bring the union into the planning process, where you can jointly devise an approach that satisfies your members.

Similarly, guard against unrealistic expectations. Workplace literacy programs are often promoted as a solution to all kinds of workplace problems, from worker safety to productivity. But . . . these programs are effective only as part of a broader labor-management plan to solve those problems together. Merely establishing a workplace literacy program unconnected to the other major needs at the workplace is most likely to cripple the program's effectiveness.

When to "Just Say No"

Workplace literacy programs can be abused. A badly designed program can harm your members and your union. If an employer advocates a program that doesn't meet your members' needs, just say, "No."

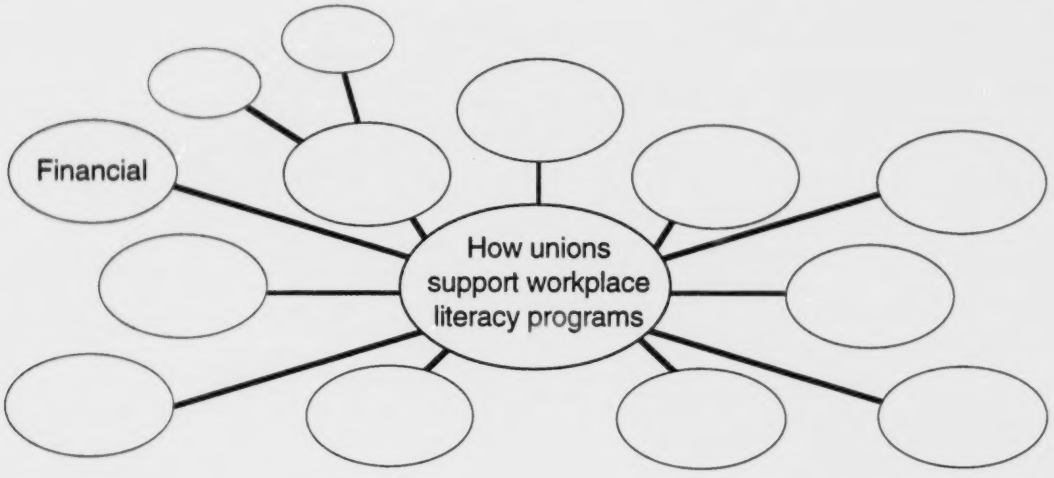
- Don't sign on to a program if you're not a full partner in it. A lesser role for the union means you can't be sure your members' legitimate interests are protected.
- Don't endorse approaches before you've examined their potential impact on your members. You might unknowingly recommend activities that damage their employment rights and opportunities, their self-respect, or their dignity.
- Don't let the content and goals of the program be imposed by others. Most adults reject programs that only teach what someone else says is "good for them." Instead, adults choose programs where they can learn what they themselves wish to learn.

Reflection on Reading 3

- How are unions supportive of workplace literacy programs? How might you use these reasons to good advantage in the way you conduct the program in which you teach?

- If you teach in a non-union environment, how can you gain the support of the workers?

- Complete this mind-mapping activity about unions. In mind mapping, elements related to the central idea—in this case, *How unions support workplace literacy programs*—are listed in the outlying circles. An example of a related element—*Financial*—is given. If, for example, unions support workplace literacy programs financially in two ways, those ways could be listed in the circles attached to that stem.



- Contact and visit with a union member or non-union worker at any area business and, through interviewing, ask how workplace education could benefit the business. Make a chart of the advantages and disadvantages using the form provided on the following page.

Advantages of Workplace Education	Disadvantages of Workplace Education

"THE CORPORATE CULTURE CLIMATE AT THE CROSSROADS: BACK TO THE FUTURE"
by V. Meussling
Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association,
Boston, Massachusetts, 1987 (ED 294 275)

In its 1984 annual report, General Electric said, "A company must change faster than the world around it. . . . You are either the very best at what you do or you don't do it for very long" (Pascarella 1986). This statement could be aligned to the uncertainties of today's corporate environment. Corporate culture has become a household word and is being perceived as a panacea by some boardroom executives.

Peters and Waterman's best seller *In Search of Excellence* (1982) has prompted organizations to strive to reproduce the "excellent" companies as young artists are striving to reproduce the color and lines of the great masters. Since Ouchi's *Theory Z* describing the transition from a top-down power structure to a structure in which power is shared at all levels, many organizations are changing their culture focus toward team managers, with employees being their own bosses.

One can define corporate culture only nebulously as the sum total of how employees and management think, feel, act or do not act. The habits of a culture may be viewed as analogous to the habits of a family or of an individual, "an organizational character" (Selznick 1952, 1957) having its own roots, holding its own concepts, beliefs, lifestyles, and norms to live and work by.

Seemingly, stories and myths help to indoctrinate and socialize new employees into the habits, values, and philosophies of a culture (Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo 1982, Wilins 1983). Clyde Kluckholm characterizes culture as "the set of habitual and traditional ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting that are characteristic of the ways a particular society meets its problems at a particular point in time" (Ernest 1984, p. 49). Problem solving can only be attained in a strong communicating family and in a strong communicating culture.

How does a corporation bring together an array of unique personalities from vastly different fields of experience and with different beliefs in such a way that they feel a universal commitment to their specific work place (Frost et al. 1985)? The Japanese have been successful because it is the custom of their culture to communicate their strong cohesive values on a national scale (Deal and Kennedy 1982). We might reason that it is this continual communication of a united culture that makes the difference between succeeding or failing.

C. S. Ford supports Kluckholm's theory when he explains that strong culture communication is "composed of responses which have been accepted because they have met with success (Schwartz and Davis 1981, p. 35)." The organization itself appears to have "socially created meanings" (Putnam 1983). As Tompkins and Cheney posit, "the organization influences the individual and the individual influences the organization" (Putnam and Pacanowsky 1983, p. 14).

In this era of deregulation, technology, foreign competition and merger mania, corporations are forced to respond to a changing cultural climate. Change can be so subtle that it is difficult to identify. John Naisbitt speaks to this point in his book *Megatrends*—

> As a society, we have been moving from the old to the new. And we are still in motion. . . . No longer do we have the luxury of operating within an isolated, self-sufficient, national economic system; we now must acknowledge that we are part of a global economy (1982, p. 1).

This driving, competitive economy has caused us to lose face with the Japanese in the automobile industry and with the Germans in the machine tool industry. Our tools were once the pride of the world (U.S. Commission on Excellence in Education 1983, pp. 6-7). Not only have we been losing

face, but we have been losing market shares in many other basic industries since the 1960s (Drucker 1985). The self concept of U.S. industry is sorely shattered. It has been imperative for industries to change dramatically or to risk losing their competitive position in the world market.

Menninger, vice-president group manager at Burson-Marsteller notes that the experiences of the recent recession taught business that "the pursuit of success has been reconceived as a kind of daily struggle for survival" ("Finding What Makes People and Organizations Prosper" 1984). Since group culture is a habit pattern (Peters and Waterman 1982), it lends security in helping people cope with environmental struggles.

In short, we could theorize that a cohesive culture is a significant crutch in mastering a changing environment. Furthermore, since the focus of a culture is primarily on the people who do the communicating, the mechanism for productivity can be found in the beliefs, action, and behavior of managers and employees (Schein 1986).

This paper focuses on the transformation of human resources which has occurred because of the changing economic, social, and technological climate. The paper stresses innovation and entrepreneurship as a major corporate challenge and emphasizes the mutual dedication of managers and employees to the achievement of company goals through interpersonal communication.

Negative Attitude Toward Change

Change is becoming such a natural way of life for the corporate world that Barrett (1985) finds it appropriate to create the nonce word *cambietics* that she defines as the new science of managing change. Companies are becoming more aware that "organizations are human institutions, nonmechanical systems. . . . In order for one to change . . . its members must develop new skills, assumptions, and values. . . ." (Kilmann et al. 1985, p. 264). Resistance to change, a natural trait, springs from the inherent need for security that compels a person to desire the same type of breakfast each morning, to insist on the same product brand, or to strive to retain the same daily lifestyle pattern.

Obviously, any change from habitual daily procedure or the comforting, protective ritual of pattern may cause tension and stress. Moreover, when a drastic change in an employee's work life is imminent, he/she may use the defense of denial in order to maintain equilibrium by refusing to accept the reality of change (Pascarella 1987). Clearly, according to Alan Frohman and Marc Fenton, change consultants, dramatic changes in the climate of a culture can be likened to the grieving process in death and dying. For the most part, even the survivors need a chance to mourn (Pascarella 1987). For this reason, it is suggested that generosity to their less fortunate colleagues serves as a solace to them.

Not so long ago, even employees who did not particularly like their jobs viewed their work environment as a dependable place where they were needed. And in a certain sense, it was relaxing to go home at night knowing the seniority alone would give them a place to work year after year until they received the gold watch of retirement.

However, the world of work is no longer taken for granted. More than ever before, the critical organizational changes (Thorne 1987) are causing psychological trauma as employees fear the unknown—either losing their jobs or at least becoming redundant. Downsizing—an overused euphemism in business circles today—literally means firing, laying-off, or some form of employee extinguishing (Mindszenthy 1986).

For both emotional and economical reasons, employees have a need to talk back and ventilate their frustrations in a face to face encounter with management. When DuPont experienced a crisis, the business manager went to the New Jersey plant at 5:00 a.m. and stayed for three shifts to talk to employees about the company's financial plans (Morse 1987).

Appropriately, IBM traditionally thinks of its employees as the company. When its Greencastle, Indiana, plant was no longer cost effective, John Akers, president and C.E.O., flew to the plant; in an overall company meeting, executives and employees were told at the same time about the plant closing. During this meeting, employees were told that they could have a job in the company's plants in other cities, early retirement was arranged for those nearing retirement, and retraining was made available for those who did not want to move. The employees were saddened and stunned, but did

not complain or rebel because of the options offered and because they were the first to be informed (personal interview 1986). Francis Bacon was aware of the desirability of being informed when he noted: "There is nothing makes a man suspect much, more than to know little."

There is no single method of managing change that is absolutely supreme (Pascarella 1987); however, there is an overwhelming agreement by change agents that employees must be considered first. Many companies are finding themselves at the crossroads of a complex reorganizational phenomenon. As they prepare to make dramatic changes for survival, their employees are feeling the impact. Employees not only need to be treated more seriously, but they need to be continually informed for maximum operational effectiveness.

Communication: Tell The People

Sociologist Emile Durkheim views the culture of an organization as a positive device which controls moral values. If family loyalty is a favored value, teamwork could engender greater motivation, compatibility, and productivity (Schein 1986) in the corporate household.

Management is beginning to ask whether the people whose lives are affected should not be part of the decision-making process. In an effort to quell rumors and generate greater respect and credibility, there is a trend toward continual communication concerning the company goals and job security (Kanter 1986). Robert Marquis of Burson-Marsteller urges that meetings be held quickly and periodically even if there is nothing substantial to report. The manner and very act of communicating may be just as important as what is said (Pawelek 1985).

In any event, employees have the inalienable right to be informed of operations that affect their lives and well-being (Gerard 1986). Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio has proposed a bill that would prevent plant closings without advance notice to employees. This bill would require that workers be informed ninety days in advance, but without any consulting or negotiating privileges (Kiplinger 1987).

Unfortunately as Tom Peters (1987) notes, "great America's answer to efficiency . . . is still to eliminate people rather than view them as a primary source of value added. There are no excellent companies."

Kanter (1987) suggests identifying change with the learning process in order to diminish the threat factor. If employees envision change as a means of retraining or redevelopment for the survival of their jobs and their organization, they will be more tolerant of the company's position. More than ever before, employee involvement and support are needed to combat employee resistance (Stackel 1985-1986, Grubbs and Reidenbach 1986).

J. Paul Dittman, vice-president for corporate planning at Whirlpool, struggled over sharing the company's new five-year "roadmap to the future" with employees. If the privileged information were leaked to its competitors, the entire innovative plan would be destroyed. His final decision was that since the employees are the company, and execute the plans, they must be told (Moskal 1986). Whirlpool maintains that this type of climate brings about cultural unity.

Employees As Management Teams

Thomas J. Watson, Jr. is still following his father's philosophy which is still right on target. He stresses a value that helped to build IBM:

> I believe the real difference between success and failure in a corporation can very often be traced to the question of how well the organization brings out the great energies and talents of its people (Watson 1963, p. 4).

Appropriately, companies are increasingly sharing the state-of-the-art with their employees who do the work. And at the same time, they are spending more time listening and encouraging creativity and innovativeness. Moreover, many of the larger organizations have adopted an attitude of entrepreneurial flexibility that perceives a certain amount of calculated failure as a learning experience (Jennings 1987).

Until the late 1970s, corporations still rigidly followed the chain of command, until the innovative products of global competition and a world quite different from the one we were familiar with, required more decision-making minds (Drake 1986). According to Drucker, being close to the market and the customer takes a lot of team effort (Drake 1986).

In citing his book, *Every Employee a Manager*, Myers envisions that if everyone in the organization has employee-owner commitment, involvement and teamwork will follow (Myers 1970).

One way to better understand Myers' theory is through the success story of Springfield Romanufacturing Center (SRC). In 1982 when International Harvester was facing turbulent times, it sold SRC to thirteen management employees, who in turn, made the existing employees the managers of the company. Employees had access to all company information and were to receive any profits. This motivation sent sales to 16 million in 1983 and to 30 million in 1985. Employee ownership sparked revitalization (Denton 1987).

In the same view, General Motors and the Saturn experiment is an innovative employee-as-manager project. The United Auto Workers and General Motors gave the status of quality managers to six thousand employees who were viewed as management with no time clocks and a guarantee of job security and profit-sharing. Working in self-directed teams, they were motivated, productive, and inherently seemed to develop a new passion for their work (Hoglund 1986).

In addition, compare the Campbell Soup Company which has virtually remained in a strong position, because even during emerging environmental change, people still eat soup. Not surprisingly, Campbell wanted to be innovative just to thrive and to celebrate a new market focus. After meeting with 1200 employees at the front office to get their input on how to improve the quality of work life, fifty business units were coached by an entrepreneur. Anthropologists and psychologists were brought in to speak on cultural attitudes about soup. Awards and compensations were given. The results were far more dramatic than the company anticipated as sales and earnings doubled and tripled (Baum 1986).

Entrepreneurial Management

As was mentioned previously, nowhere has change been more shattering than in the massacre of middle management. Too many chiefs and not enough Indians is not cost effective in today's intensely competitive market. The future promises no respite in this economic and competitively stressful climate. Business is meeting the challenge by welcoming innovation with entrepreneurial participatory management styles (Kanter 1983). The term "entrepreneur" was coined by a French economist J. B. Say approximately two hundred years ago, and at the same time, he defined the term as a person who "shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield" (Drucker 1985).

In other words, entrepreneurs are placed in a position of power to improve business. According to Kanter, "they push the creation of new products, lead the development of new production technology, or experiment with new, more humanly responsive work practices" (Kanter 1983). Entrepreneurs must be given the authority to go out on a limb and get nonroutine things done. As an example of entrepreneurial thinking, Hewlett-Packard's long-term growth rate is attributed to the company's belief that every employee should strive to be an entrepreneur (Uttal 1983, p. 66).

Xerox has created a new way of corporate life with employee teamwork, commitment, and business improvements. CEO David T. Kearns proudly tells about the 100,000 employees at Xerox who are problem solvers and trouble shooters for the company that brings them profit; he estimates cost savings of two billion dollars annually. One team solved a laser-printer field problem that engineers had failed to solve in five years, with savings for the company of one million dollars a year (Thompson 1986).

Kanter (1986a) asserts that above all other qualities, an entrepreneur must know how to organize others and delegate work. In the traditional sense, managers were present in their offices to solve short-term problems; now entrepreneurs work with the people, alter moods, and change the way people think about what is necessary and possible.

Drucker (1985) comments that in an entrepreneurial style of management, each employer has freedom to become a trailblazer by using his initiative and sharing his ideas.

In Hertzberg's findings of managing human resources, he maintains that management must make the work interesting if an employee is to feel passionate about his job (Hertzberg 1987). Data from many of his employee interviews revealed that when people were dissatisfied with their jobs,

they attributed that feeling to the work itself (Hersey and Blanchard 1982).

Similarly, Chris Argyris' findings in his comparison of bureaucratic/pyramidal values with humanistic/democratic values reveal that entrepreneurial, democratic, humanistic values make work life more exciting and challenging. This in turn fosters motivation, brings about intergroup cohesiveness, and helps both employees and the organization to develop to full potential (Hersey and Blanchard 1982).

The significance of modern times suggests that our work system must shift to a more participatory, innovative managerial system where the managers switch from status decision-makers to contributing coaches who place the ball in the hands of the workers (Kanter 1986b).

John Brodie, former quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers football team, gives insight into true incalculable team energy—

> When you have men who know each other very well and have every ounce of their attention—and intention—focused on a common goal, and all their energy flowing in the same direction, this creates a very special concentration of power. Everyone feels it. The people in the stands always feel it and respond to it, whether they have a name for it or not (Beck and Hillmar 1984, p. 22).

Organizational Goals and Objectives

Traditional leadership styles cannot develop the kind of team work to which Brodie refers; this style depends on an enthusiastic, dedicated coach. As a coach believes his team is number one, a manager must believe his company is number one. Instead of directing the plays from his office, he manages his team by walking around (MBWA).

The coaching management symbols MBWA means being there, staying in touch, listening, teaching, innovating, emphasizing and facilitating on the field with the team (Peters and Austin 1985). For the most part, it means using common sense or humanistic management in dealing with the employees involved in the work. MBWA means many things when common sense is not so common; for instance, it can mean finding out what people are thinking, what type of problem they are facing, or what is "bugging" them. It allows employees freedom to operate on their own. An example that could be classical is told about Don Vlcek, president of Domino's Pizza Distribution Company:

> He was on one of his regular field trips, and a supervisor was complaining that in the process of delivering dough to one particular shop, delivery people had repeatedly broken an exposed basement window. Vlcek whipped a $20 bill out of his pocket and said, "Buy some plywood and cover it permanently. . . . We don't have any rules that prevented you from doing that. I expect you, within reasonable limits, to do what needs to be done" (Peters and Austin 1985, p. 380).

President Vlcek gave his supervisor clear direction as to the strategy expected. Employees need to have direction and to understand that the corporate purpose is built on personal purpose and on the basis of what needs to be done (Frohman and Pascarella 1986). Without direction and a clearly defined roadmap of organizational goals and objectives, efforts of employees may fail (McTague 1986).

Many companies today are spelling out their goals, values, and ideals to employees through mission or purpose statements. This mission or purpose statement concretely communicates to the employees the philosophy of the company and how employees must direct their efforts (Frohman and Pascarella 1987). As leadership and clarity of company purpose is defined in a mission statement, employee teams have a specific goal to follow in their daily decision making.

As an example, 3M has one ingrained motto, "Never kill an idea" (Corbett 1986). Many successful products, including the post-it-notes, evolved from that single motto. A purpose/mission statement encompasses the reputation and personality of a company's culture; e.g., IBM's "customer service, excellence, and respect for the individual" (Frohman and Pascarella 1987) has been a recognized mission of the company world-wide.

Geoff Nightingale, executive vice-president of Burson Marsteller, the New York-based public relations firm, indicates that his firm has been barraged with requests for mission-generating goals

and objectives from European firms (Pascarella 1986b).

The mission statement may be the key for top-down commitment. Employees must have role models for commitment ideals; they easily detect any inconsistency between written policy and executive performance. At the same time, it is the manager's first job to assume that his employees are committed. Schatz and Schatz (1986) imply that showing trust in employees and giving them freedom to perform may evoke a self-fulfilling prophecy of commitment.

Most important, the entire organization should be provided with a definition of the reputation that the company intends to live up to in conducting business. The positions of management and workers may blur as the two groups focus together on what is important for the company. Such a situation echoes to Marshal McLuan's theme, "No passengers on spaceship earth; we are all crew."

Conclusion

This paper focused on the transformation of human resources which has occurred because of the changing economic, social, and technological climate. It discussed employee attitudes toward change and the ethical duty of management to keep employees informed of impending change. The paper stressed innovation and entrepreneurship as a major corporate challenge. Finally, it emphasized the need for mutual dedication of managers and employees to the achievement of company goals. Future research would call for greater sensitivity between management and employees in the execution of the change process.

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Reflection on Reading 4

- As described in the reading, what is corporate culture?
- List the reasons why knowing the corporate culture is important to you as a workplace literacy instructor?
- What challenges do you foresee in working within a corporate culture and a union environment?

Activities: Reading 4

- Create a lesson that will incorporate the concept of corporate culture into one of the basic skill areas (math, reading, language, etc.)
- Locate an article from an area newspaper or business magazine that reflects an idea stated in this reading.

The Context of Workplace Literacy: The Workplace

- Develop a written plan for a presentation you could use to gain the support of representatives of business, industry, and labor for a workplace literacy program.

TOPIC: The Context of Workplace Literacy: The Workplace

Evaluation Guidelines

Directions: Check your competency with the following criteria:

Learner Self-Check		Review Checklist
Did you—		Did the learner—
☐	1. Provide an overview of the key characteristics of workplace literacy programs?	☐
☐	2. Describe how such programs differ from other literacy programs?	☐
☐	3. Indicate how such programs can develop the major skills employers desire in their employees?	☐
☐	4. Indicate the impact of such programs on organizational goals and objectives and on the business initiatives valued today (e.g., ISO 9000, TQM, SPC, CQI)?	☐
☐	5. Highlight the benefits of such programs?	☐
☐	6. Underscore the need for cooperation between all involved parties (e.g., representatives of the program, the company, the union, non-union workers)?	☐

Learner: _____ Reviewer: _____

Level of Performance: If the evaluation results indicate a need for further competency development—or if the learner wishes to pursue the topics covered in further breadth or depth—please refer to the supplementary resources described in the Annotated Bibliography, which follows.

Alvarez, C. "An Experienced Worker's View of the Workplace." *Vocational Education Journal* v67/n3 (March 1992): 34-35.

This production foreman's account of what is needed for success in the workplace, including training, provides a perspective on the changing workplace and the need for training.

Carnevale, A. P.; Gainer, L .J.; and Meltzer, A. S. *Workplace Basics: The Essential Skills Employers Want.* ASTD Best Practices Series: Training for a Changing Workforce. 1st ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1990. (ED 319 979)

This book is designed to provide readers with an in-depth understanding of the 16 skills that employers believe are workplace basics. The nine parts present information about—

- economic importance of the 16 skills and a theoretical basis for why these skills are important;
- learning to learn—the foundation skill on which all other skills are based;
- reading, writing, and computation—the skills on which technical competence is built;
- oral communication and listening—the skills that enable people to communicate effectively on the job;
- problem solving and creative thinking—the adaptability skills that enable workers to be flexible in the workplace;
- self-esteem, motivation and goal setting, and employability and career development—the developmental skills that enable people to keep and hold jobs and to move up the career ladder;
- interpersonal skills, teamwork, and negotiation—the group effectiveness skills that enable people to work together productively;
- organizational effectiveness and leadership—the influencing skills that enable people to bring a task to completion; and
- the applied approach, including a model for establishing a workplace basics program.

A 40-page list of references and suggested readings is included, as well as a name index and a subject index.

Carnevale, A. P.; Gainer, L. J.; and Meltzer, A. S. *Workplace Basics Training Manual.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1990. (ED 319-980)

A result of a 3-year study, this document gives step-by-step instructions for establishing and implementing a program to teach the basic skills necessary in the workplace. The resulting programs use the applied approach that motivates learners by linking learning to improved job performance. The document is intended for practitioners and administrators responsible for providing private or public training programs; administrators and instructors involved in basic skills programs; business and management consultants; and secondary, postsecondary, vocational, and adult educators. The introduction explains what skills employers want. The

next section explains the document's format, including the meaning of various symbols used. The bulk of the document explains these steps of program development:

- Identifying job changes or problems related to basic workplace skills
- Charting a course for building management and union support for workplace basics training programs
- Developing and presenting an action plan to management and unions, including guidelines for selecting outside training providers
- Performing a task analysis
- Designing a curriculum
- Implementing the program
- Evaluating and monitoring the program

A glossary, index, and five appendices conclude the document. The appendices profile two workplace basics training program experiences, give information on locating providers of basic skills and getting help in setting up the program, provide a sample form that can be used to request proposals from potential providers, and provide generic curriculum guidelines. Lists of recommended reading accompany most chapters.

Developing Workplace Literacy Programs. Bloomington, IN: Language Education Department, School of Education, Indiana University, 1992. (ED 348 578)

This packet contains a series of five brochures that discuss workplace literacy program development. Each brochure deals with a specific aspect of such programs and reflects the expertise of several successful program developers and instructors. The brochures cover the following topics: (1) gaining management support; (2) working with management and unions; (3) discussing training needs; (4) recruiting students; and (5) planning ahead. The brochures follow a question-and-answer format and provide specific suggestions for the various aspects of setting up a workplace literacy program.

"Myth # 15: Management and Labor Agree on Literacy Goals." *The Literacy Beat* v4/n3 (August 1991): 1-4. (ED 336 547)

This issue of the Education Writers Association newsletter focuses on the differing views of workplace literacy efforts held by labor unions and company management.

Passmore, D. L.; Garcia, T.; Silvis, B. L.; and Mohamed, D. A. *Requirements for Workplace Literacy: An Interindustry Model*. University Park, PA: Department of Vocational and Industrial Education, University of Pennsylvania, 1990. (ED 326 671)

Demonstrates analytical methods for relating the production and consumption of goods and services in an economy to the requirements for literacy among its workers. Uses an economic model developed by economist Wassily Leontief, called the interindustry model, to expose the links among production, consumption, employment, and literacy.

Philippi, J. W. "Basic Skills/Workplace Literacy Training." In *Human Resource Management and Development Handbook*, 2nd ed., edited by W. R. Tracey. New York, NY: AMACOM, 1994.

An experienced workplace literacy practitioner provides a summary perspective tying workplace literacy to the broader human resources perspective.

Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, CLC. *Workplace Education from A to Z: A Handbook for SEIU Local Union Leaders.* Washington, DC: American Labor Education Center, 1992. (ED 347 395)

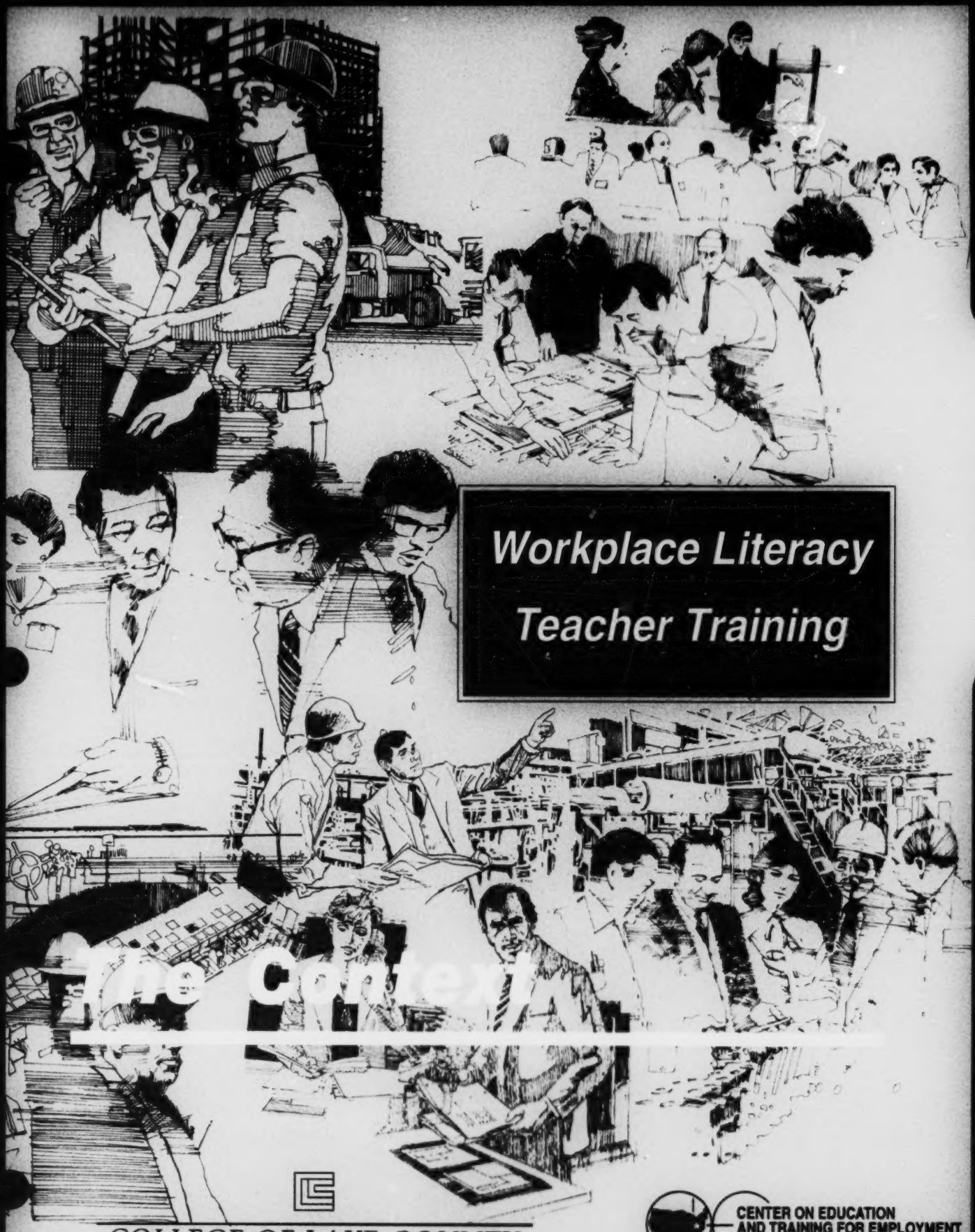
Designed to provide guidance for the local union setting up a worker education program from basic skills to job training, this publication is based on the experiences of many different Service Employees International Union locals with many diverse programs. It shares lessons learned, gives warnings and directions, and explains solutions for successful programs.

Sticht, T. G. *Functional Context Education Workshop Resource Notebook.* San Diego, CA: Applied Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, 1987.

Establishes the foundation for functional context education from a research perspective and indicates how to apply the concept.

Taylor, M. C.; Lewe, G. R.; and Draper, J. A., eds. *Basic Skills for the Workplace.* Toronto: Culture Concepts, 1991. (ED 333 180)

A practitioner's guide to developing literacy training programs for workers that contains 28 chapters divided into four parts: understanding the need for workplace literacy, identifying workplace training needs, examples of practice in workplace basic skills training, and discovering approaches for program development.



Workplace Literacy Teacher Training

COLLEGE OF LAKE COUNTY

CENTER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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The Context of Workplace Literacy
The Learner

Introduction

Through the various ages and stages of life, the characteristics of learners change. As they age and mature, learners have a deeper wealth of experience upon which to draw, tend to become more self-directed, want to immediately apply what they have learned, and may develop increased intrinsic motivation.

As a workplace literacy instructor, you can capitalize on your learners' ability to immediately apply what they learn in a real-life situation as well as their past work experiences. However, you will also need to address any unresolved work and learning issues. Adults who participate in workplace literacy programs may have gender-related work and learning issues, display cultural differences, be educationally disadvantaged, or possess a learning disability. Although they may be challenged by a variety of circumstances, it is important that each be perceived as an individual learner who brings unique strengths as well as unique needs to the program.

The media have made people aware of the significant learning needs that must be addressed if the nation's work force is to advance in economic productivity. However, it is not useful to approach workplace literacy programming from the perspective of the "medical model" in which remediation of problems is the focus and the adults are seen as needing to be cured in some way. Indeed, because the findings of teaching-learning research are pointing vigorously to learner participation as an essential component of effective learning, it is logical that a far more fruitful thrust will be to elicit and build on learner strengths. Then learners are more likely to perceive of themselves as capable of participating and making contributions. Further, it accords them the dignity and respect they deserve as adults.

Adult workers bring to the educational setting a great deal of knowledge from their work as well as from their family and daily lives. They have been functioning, effectively in most respects, in a job, family, and community setting. They may not recognize themselves how valuable a resource this is; they may take it for granted, much as others with strong literacy skills often take those for granted. Learners should be helped to identify and analyze what they have achieved in their work and elsewhere. They will be encouraged to value it as it is made explicit, shared, and used as the basis for further learning.

Learners who have not done well in previous formal education experiences should not be assumed to lack intelligence. Many school environments have not been conducive to success for learners of differing learning styles, who may have been made to feel incapable as well as powerless. Further, as Jurmo and Fingeret point out—

> This assumption ignores the tact that many nonreading adults have not attended schools or that they have attended only sporadically. More fundamentally, however, numerous studies document the fact that intelligence and success in school do not necessarily coincide.

Intelligence test bias, educational system cultural bias, and environmental and economic circumstances often militate against successful performance of school tasks.[1]

Jurmo and Fingeret also caution against judging nonreading adults within the framework of a dominant group's reading and writing-based culture. The learners' subculture may be primarily oral, grounded in talking with others to learn and share information. Additionally, members of the learners's close community may assist each other, with some undertaking reading and writing tasks while others contribute in different ways. These learners understandably are likely to resist educational isolation, yet can be assisted in adopting new roles in a setting that is supportive and encouraging.

Men, women, and minorities, as adult groups, have different ways of perceiving the workplace and different ways of reacting to it. Within each of these groups is a diverse set of individuals. The readings in this learning guide will help you better understand the people who will attend the program so that you can be sensitive to the diverse points of view and experiences they will bring to learning. It will also provide an opportunity to consider the multiple perspectives necessary when engaging a group of learners in a workplace literacy program.

Objectives

- Apply the theories of adult education (andragogy) to the development of workplace literacy programming.
- Identify barriers to learner success (e.g., gender barriers, economic barriers) and strategies for overcoming these barriers.
- Identify the impact of workplace diversity and ways to make programming more culturally sensitive.
- Identify signs of learning disabilities and intervention strategies for addressing them.
- Modify lesson and program plans to meet the needs of adults regardless of their gender, culture, or existing learning disabilities.

1. A. Fingeret and P. Jurmo, eds., *Participatory Literacy Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1989), p. 10.

To Help You Meet the Objectives

- Study the material that follows:

  Reading 1: The Adult Learner
  - ~ Teaching Adults: Is It Different?
  - ~ Guidelines for Working with Adult Learners

  Reading 2: Gender-Related Work and Learning Issues
  - ~ Women, Human Development, and Learning
  - ~ Women, Work, and Literacy

  Reading 3: Cultural Differences
  - ~ Adult Education and Multiculturalism
  - ~ A Guide to Specific Cultural Differences in Hispanic Students
  - ~ Is Your Program Culturally Sensitive?
  - ~ Addressing Workforce Diversity and Cross Cultural Issues

  Reading 4: The Learning Disabled
  - ~ Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities
  - ~ Dealing with Adult Learning Disabilities

- Reflect on the questions posed after each reading. The questions are designed to help you clarify and extract meaning from the reading that can be helpfully applied. There are benefits to both individual and interactive reflection—
  - ~ As an individual, consider how you would apply the information either in the program to which you are already assigned or in a program to which you might be assigned.
  - ~ If you are able to discuss these questions with other instructors or program staff, try to get other perspectives on the reading. Compare notes on the ways the ideas can be and have been applied in their experience. If the experiences differ, help each other probe the possible reasons for the differences.
- Complete the Application Activity.
- Evaluate your own competencies using the Evaluation Guidelines. This is an opportunity to assess your own learning and identify any areas in which you feel less competent or confident. If indicated or desired, take advantage of the opportunity to review the related material in the Annotated Bibliography. You may also want to seek out a more experienced person who can be a mentor to you on this topic, helping you assess your competency and acting as a resource person.
- Ask your reviewer to evaluate your skills also. Be sure to note the input from the reviewer that can provide the basis for your further competency building.

To Help the Reviewer Guide and Evaluate Learner Performance

These learning guides have been designed to allow for maximum flexibility of use. For those individuals using them for professional development (without ties to a formal program), the guides allow for self-study. Such use may, however, limit the opportunity for interaction and practice in a group setting. Therefore, if learners are completing these guides in a group setting under your direction, it is strongly recommended that you identify such opportunities and capitalize upon them.

Reflection questions at the end of each Reading and an Application Activity and Evaluation Guidelines at the end of each learning guide provide opportunities for you, as a reviewer, to monitor learner progress and evaluate learner performance on the workplace literacy knowledge and skills being developed. However, your expectations should be based somewhat on the learner's background (e.g., previous instructional experience) and the learner's progress in the program. Individuals with previous experience as instructors in workplace literacy programs should be expected to extend their thinking and activities beyond the level expected of those without such experience.

For example, if the learner is asked to "define company culture," individuals ***without*** instructional experience would be expected to respond solely on the basis of their reflections concerning the readings provided within the guide. The responses expected of individuals with instructional experience, however, should go beyond the readings, incorporating their real-world experiences as well. Likewise, as individuals complete more and more of the learning guides, their work should reflect that progress. Knowledge and skills gained in earlier guides should be ***integrated*** into their reflections and activities as they work through later guides.

Flexibility can also be provided concerning how the learner will demonstrate competency. At a minimum, the learner should submit ***written*** descriptions, definitions, and explanations to demonstrate successful completion of the Application Activity. These should be evaluated—by both you and the learner—using the criteria provided in the Evaluation Guidelines. If feasible, however, you should also arrange to meet with the learner to discuss his or her written documentation. At that time, you could also pose hypothetical or actual situations related to the skill criteria and ask the learner how he or she would handle those situations. Another possibility would be to ask individuals to perform the skill as part of a presentation or demonstration to others in the class or group.

It is also desirable that, whenever possible, you and the learner identify opportunities for expanding on the learning experiences presented in the guide—ways for the learner to apply the learning more deeply and broadly. The question, "What plans do you have for learning more about the skill covered in this guide?" could well be a standard one. In many cases, the learner can use his or her work in the Application Activity as a building block for further exploration.

In summary, the learning situation is not one in which strict criterion-referenced standards based on percentage attainment or mastery levels are suitable, nor would one mode of demonstration be feasible—or appropriate—for everyone. You and the learner should discuss and reach agreement in advance on the level of achievement expected and mode of demonstration to be used so as to create the optimal learning experience. The intent is for the learner's professional development to be competency-based, rigorous, and designed to motivate further learning, yet sensibly adapted to the situation and to the learner's needs and abilities. Hopefully, the learners will carry this flexible philosophy and approach into their own workplace literacy programs.

TEACHING ADULTS: IS IT DIFFERENT?
ERIC Digest No. 82 by S. Imel
Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1989 (ED 305 495)

The adult education literature generally supports the idea that teaching adults should be approached in a different way than teaching children and adolescents, groups sometimes referred to as preadults. The assumption that teachers of adults should use a style of teaching different from that used with preadults is based on "informed professional opinion; philosophical assumptions associated with humanistic psychology and progressive education; and a growing body of research and theory on adult learning, development, and socialization" (Beder and Darkenwald 1982, p. 143). Following a discussion of the major model underlying this assumption, this ERIC Digest examines research that investigates differences in these teaching styles and suggests considerations for practice.

The Andragogical Model

Malcolm Knowles (1980, 1984) is attributed with developing the most cogent model underlying the assumption that teaching adults should differ from teaching children and adolescents (Beder and Darkenwald 1982). By contrasting "andragogical" or learner-centered methods with "pedagogical" or teacher-centered methods, Knowles argues that adults differ from preadults in a number of important ways that affect learning and, consequently, how they approach learning. Therefore, according to Knowles, the more traditional pedagogical model is inappropriate for use with adults.

The following assumptions underlie Knowles' (1984) andragogical model:

- Adults tend to be self-directing.
- Adults have a rich reservoir of experience that can serve as a resource for learning.
- Since adults' readiness to learn is frequently affected by their need to know or do something, they tend to have a life-, task-, or problem-centered orientation to learning as contrasted to a subject-matter orientation.
- Adults are generally motivated to learn due to internal or intrinsic factors as opposed to external or extrinsic forces.

Although the assumptions underlying the andragogical model have to do with how adults learn, the model has clear implications for teaching practice: if adult learning differs from preadult learning, then it follows that adults should be taught differently (Beder and Darkenwald 1982, Feuer and Geber 1988).

Since he first proposed the model, Knowles has gradually modified his position regarding the contrast between how preadults learn (pedagogy) and how adults learn (andragogy). According to Feuer and Geber (1988), "what he once envisioned as unique characteristics of adult learners, he now sees as innate tendencies of all human beings, tendencies that emerge as people mature" (p. 33). Nevertheless, the andragogical model has strongly influenced the adult education field, with one result being the assumption teaching adults should differ from teaching children and adolescents.

What the Research Says

Although the andragogical approach to teaching adults has been widely espoused by adult educators, until recently there has been no effort to test whether teachers do actually use a different style when teaching adults. Two studies (Beder and Darkenwald 1982; Gorham 1984, 1985) examined this area by investigating the following questions: Do teachers teach adults in a different way, and if so, what are these differences? In both studies, subjects were teachers who taught both adults and preadults. In the Beder and Darkenwald study, information was collected solely through a self-report questionnaire. Gorham used an adaptation of Beder and Darkenwald's questionnaire for the

initial phase of her study, followed up with classroom observations of a small number of her sample for a second phase.

In order for the instruction of adults to differ from the instruction of preadults, teachers have to perceive that there are differences in how adults learn. Both studies investigated perceptions of these learning differences and found that teachers believed adults to be significantly more intellectually curious, motivated to learn, willing to take responsibility for their learning, willing to work hard at learning, clear about what they want to learn, and concerned with the practical applications and implications of learning than were children and adolescents.

In both studies, as a result of these perceived differences in how adults and preadults learn, respondents reported significant differences in teaching styles. As compared to teaching children and adolescents, when teaching adults, they spend less time on discipline and giving directions, provide less emotional support to students, structure instructional activities less tightly, and vary their teaching techniques more. Beder and Darkenwald also found significant differences in adult classes in greater use of group discussion, more adjustment in instructional content in response to student feedback, and a greater relationship of class material to student life experiences.

The self-reported differences in teaching behavior were not verified through Gorham's (1984, 1985) follow-up classroom observations. Although she found that with preadults, teachers tended to provide more emotional support and overtly to be more directive, overall, the use of directive teacher behavior was essentially the same with both preadults and adults. In interviews, teachers "spoke often of the responsiveness of adult students and of the quality of discussion in adult classes. . . but these differences . . . did not appear to influence teachers to adopt the less directive, more student-centered approaches to teaching adults they had reported" (1985, p. 205).

The only exception to the lack of congruence between self-reported and observed behavior was in the classrooms of teachers who changed their classroom environments when teaching adults. Gorham (1984) observed that a nontraditional, less-formal room arrangement (e.g., chairs in a circle) that put the teacher in closer proximity to the students led to a "clear use of the more student-centered approach prescribed for teaching adults" (p. 79). Furthermore, Gorham noted that in her study only female teachers made such adjustments.

Additional findings related to Gorham's analysis of the classroom observations are as follows:

- Teachers with more formal training in adult education tend to use student-centered approaches the least.
- Differences among teachers, in both adult and preadult classes, are more pronounced than differences between the adult and preadult classes.
- Teachers who are the most flexible and responsive in both adult and preadult classes are in the following groups: less-experienced teachers, female teachers, teachers who taught personal enrichment adult classes, secondary teachers, or teachers reporting high teaching differences between how they taught adults and preadults.

Considerations for Practice

Is teaching adults different? Based on the literature discussed here, the answer is both yes and no. Although teachers perceive adults as being different, these perceptions do not automatically translate into differences in approaches to teaching.

Perhaps a better way to frame the question is to ask "Should teaching adults be different?" According to Darkenwald and Beder (1982), "the real issue is not whether learner-centered methods are universally applied by teachers of adults, but rather for what purposes and under what conditions such methods, and others are most appropriate and effective and in fact used by teachers" (p. 153). Gorham (1985), in citing studies that identified interaction patterns of "master" preadult teachers as being less directive and more student-centered than those of "average" preadult teachers, suggests that "the most cogent prescription might be to define responsive teaching techniques as the approved practice for educators at all levels . . ." (p. 207).

Based on these observations, some considerations for practice emerge.

1. Determine the purpose of the teaching-learning situation. The andragogical or learner-centered approach is not appropriate in all adult education settings (Feuer and Geber 1988). The

decision about which approach to use is contextual and is based upon such things as the goals of the learners, the material to be covered, and so forth.

2. Provide opportunities for teachers to practice learner-centered methods. Gorham (1984) suggests training teachers in techniques especially suitable for adult students, such as small-group discussion methods, effective use of nontraditional room arrangements, and so forth.
3. Select teachers on the basis of their potential to provide learner-centered instructional settings. Gorham's (1984, 1985) study identified some characteristics of teachers who seemed to be more flexible and responsive in adult settings. However, she also suggests that more research is needed.

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GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH ADULT LEARNERS
ERIC Digest No. 77 by S. Imel
Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1988 (ED 299 456)

Between 1969 and 1984, the number of adults participating in educational programs increased 79 percent, and the number of activities doubled (Hill 1987). The growth of adult education is being stimulated by a number of broad demographic, economic, and societal trends including the following:

- The increased realization that adults continue to change and grow throughout their lives and frequently seek assistance in dealing with these changes
- The greater proportion of adults in the total population due to increased longevity and declining birthrates
- The higher demand for occupational and professional training due to the presence of the baby boom generation in the work force
- The growing need for job retraining caused by economic and technological changes that have eliminated some jobs and revised the nature of many others

This ERIC Digest, a revision of Fact Sheet No. 25 (Imel [1982]), provides guidelines to consider when developing educational programs for adults in any setting. It focuses on the characteristics of adults that affect learning, describing how to develop a climate that is conducive to adult learning as well as identifying appropriate evaluation

strategies. Brief reviews of some recent resources conclude the Digest.

Characteristics of Adult Learners

Adults possess characteristics that influence how they learn and that should be considered when developing instructional programs. Although it is important to realize that each adult is an individual, some generalizations can be applied to adult learners. Through a review of the literature on adult learners, Kalamas (1987) identified the following:

- ***Adults can learn throughout their lives.*** Unfortunately, adults are frequently their own worst enemies when it comes to doubting their ability to learn new things. Older adults, particularly, may need encouragement to engage in learning activities. One advantage adults have over youth in their ability to learn is a broad range of experience. These experiences enhance their ability to perceive, process, and use information and provide a foundation for gaining additional knowledge.
- ***Adult life cycles influence learning.*** Every adult progresses through a series of life phases. In each phase of life, certain behaviors and skills—known as developmental tasks—need to be learned. Life-cycle phases influence how individuals approach learning as well as what they want or need to learn. Designers of instructional programs should consider the developmental needs of adult learners at specific developmental stages. (See Naylor [1985] for more information about adult development.)
- ***Adults learn what they consider important.*** Adult learning is usually motivated by the need to acquire a new skill or make a decision. When adults perceive a need to learn something, they are generally capable of working very hard. Since most adult learning is voluntary, adults also have the prerogative of dropping out of programs that do not meet their needs.
- ***Adults are often time-conscious learners.*** Adults have many roles (e.g., spouse, parent, employee, community member) in addition to that of learner. Therefore, most want to meet their educational goals as directly, quickly, and efficiently as possible.
- ***What is important varies among adults.*** Adults engage in educational programs for a variety of reasons. Most—75 percent—enroll for job-related reasons, but others take nonoccupational courses for personal or social reasons (Hill 1987). Because adults know what goals are important to them, they tend to do best in educational experiences that provide what they value.
- ***Adults wish to be treated as such—sometimes.*** By adulthood, individuals have developed an independent view of self, and most adults want to be treated as if they were responsible individuals with the capacity to determine things for themselves. Adult learning situations should be designed to allow adults to retain as much autonomy as possible. Because some adults have experienced only structured and teacher-centered learning environments, they may need assistance in accepting responsibility for their own learning.
- ***Biological changes may affect learning.*** Although adults can continue to learn throughout their lives, physical changes may need to be considered when planning and conducting educational activities. Biological changes such as speed and reaction time, visual and auditory acuity, and intellectual functioning may all affect learning. Educators can modify the learning environment to minimize the effect of these changes. It is important to keep in mind, however, that most adults will not experience physical decline serious enough to affect their ability to learn, at least until they are very old.

Creating a Climate for Adult Learning

Creating a learning environment that meets the needs of adult learners is a key element of successful adult education programs. The challenge is to create a nonthreatening atmosphere in which adults have permission and are expected to share in the responsibility for their learning. Following are some strategies for accomplishing this:

- ***Establish adult-to-adult rapport.*** To build rapport with adults in the learning environment, use positive nonverbal communication, deal with the whole person, address learners as equals, share authority, and employ informal room arrangements such as placing all the chairs in a circle, in a U, or around a table.

Adult students also appreciate instructors who share appropriate information about themselves and who are approachable and accessible.

- ***Create a participatory environment.*** A participatory environment, which helps learners assume responsibility for their own learning, can be created by involving the learners in deciding on course content and establishing class management guidelines, having learners serve as instructional resources, and monitoring learner satisfaction throughout the activity. Providing multiple learning options, which enables learners to choose those methods and materials best suited to their needs, will also encourage participation.
- ***Facilitate adult independence.*** Instructors can help adults assume more responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to learn on their own, serving as a role model of an independent adult learner, and teaching decision-making and problem-solving techniques.
- ***Provide for individual differences.*** Because they have an independent self-concept, adults view themselves as individuals, and it is important to acknowledge adults as individuals in the educational setting. Individual differences can be accommodated by using a variety of instructional techniques, providing appropriate and varied instructional materials, relating instruction to learners' experience, and adjusting for physiological and psychological differences.

A climate in which adult learning flourishes provides the opportunity for adult learners to have ownership, to participate, and to feel that the activity is related to their needs.

Evaluating Adult Learning

Although many adult learning activities do not require formal evaluation procedures, adult learners need to learn how to identify and evaluate their own resources, abilities, and knowledge realistically. When formal evaluation is required, "[e]valuation strategies for adults are most effective when traditional authority roles are deemphasized, and the learner's role as an autonomous, responsible adult is emphasized" (Kopp 1987, p. 50). Adults should be involved not only in determining what they learn but also in identifying and establishing their own evaluation techniques.

Kopp suggests the following three collaborative approaches that can be used in establishing a basis for evaluation.

1. Group decision making in which class members participate jointly in identifying and selecting evaluation strategies to be used
2. Learning contracts that help learners clarify their objectives, document their learning and evaluation plans, and commit themselves to the work they have contracted to do
3. Grading contracts that provide learners with options in the relative weight of evaluation activities and in the amount of work they will perform

Involving adults in evaluating their own learning activities helps them become more independent and self-directed in their learning endeavors.

Resources on Adult Learning

A number of recent publications can be used in designing programs for adult learners. In addition to those listed in the References, the following books will serve as helpful resources for those seeking more information on this aspect of adult education.

- *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn* (Wlodkowski 1985) presents 68 motivational strategies designed to increase adult learning in a wide variety of settings. Also described are the characteristics and skills of a motivating instructor.
- *Helping Adults Learn* (Knox 1986) is a comprehensive guide to all aspects of planning, implementing, and evaluating programs for adult learners. The book includes practical "how-to" advice that is supported by examples from practice as well as checklists and guidelines to be used in program development.
- *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning* (Brookfield 1986) critically examines and analyzes current approaches to adult learning, presents a comprehensive review of how adults learn, and proposes ways to develop more creative, up-to-date adult education programs. Brookfield explores what he calls the "theory-practice disjunctions" between theories-in-use and espoused theories.

References

This ERIC Digest is based on the following series:

Category N: Teaching Adults, Professional Teacher Education Module Series. Columbus, OH: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1987. (ED 289 964 through ED 289 969) The following modules from the series were used in developing this Digest:

- Kalamas, D. *Prepare to Work with Adult Learners.* Module N-1. (ED 289 964)
- Kopp, K. *Evaluate the Performance of Adults.* Module N-6. (ED 289 969)
- *Manage the Adult Instructional Process.* Module N-5. (ED 289 968)

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Reflection on Reading 1

- How does androgogy differ from pedagogy? How might these differences be applied positively in a workplace learning program that is sensitive to the characteristics of adult learners?

- List four ways in which you can create a non-threatening environment for adults. Why might this be an important aspect of a workplace basics program?

WOMEN, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, AND LEARNING
ERIC Digest No. 139 by S. Kerka
Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1993 (ED 358 379)

Do men and women speak in different voices? Are differences between men and women inborn (sex specific) or environmentally conditioned (gender related)? The theories and models of human development form an important basis for the practice of adult education. However, a growing body of literature is questioning whether existing models apply equally to men and women, and the origins of developmental differences are hotly debated. This *Digest* looks at what some say are women's "different voices" and at others who disagree with this concept. ("Voice" is defined as a sense of self and how one makes meaning of the world [Belenky et al. 1986].) It concludes with suggestions for teaching and learning based on broader perspectives of human development.

Hearing Other Voices?

Prevailing theories of human development have been criticized for being based on research with primarily male subjects, often of a single ethnic, racial, or class background. Caffarella (1992) points to the work of Gilligan, Belenky et al., and others who have identified the lack of female perspectives in these theories. These authors propose that women have different ways of growing and knowing, generally characterized as follows. For women, identity is linked to relationships, connection with others, and intimacy rather than being a separate, self-defined individual. They prefer cooperation rather than competition. Moral decisions are based on an ethic of caring (emphasizing context and relationships) rather than an ethic of justice (reciprocity, fairness, and rules) (Liddell et al. 1993). Caffarella's (1992) review of both traditional and alternative models of female development found the following themes: relationships are the core of women's self-concept, identity and intimacy are issues of prime importance, and women's development usually does not follow the linear patterns supposed to be typical of males.

Some research supports this viewpoint. Kazemek (1989) identified in literature a male and female morality: The male, based on objectivity, results in judgment, rules, and hierarchies of values; the female, grounded in relationships, results in concern for and responsibility to others. When Liddell et al. (1993) tested Gilligan's justice/caring ethic, they found that women scored higher on the ethic of care but there were no gender differences on the ethic of justice. In Rosener's study of female executives (Noble 1993), men's preferred leadership style was "command and control"; women preferred to work interactively, sharing power and information.

Caffarella (1992) notes that "these observations are not generalizable to all women and perhaps not even to many women" (p. 20). One reason, she concludes, is problems with the designs, methods, and populations of the studies. She advocates (1) expanding women-only samples in terms of age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic level; (2) enlarging the repertoire of qualitative and quantitative techniques; (3) using other theoretical perspectives such as feminist theory and critical theory; and (4) testing theories, models, and themes attributed to women's development with men-only or mixed samples to determine how they apply to all people. She also notes that women of different age groups experience different expectations, resulting in little agreement as to what constitutes maturity for women.

Concerns, Cautions, and Contraindications

A number of people have raised other issues about emphasizing the "differentness" of women. A primary concern is the danger of stereotyping, of perpetuating traditional sex roles. "People often take a leap from recognizing a difference to judging it . . . as an indication of deficiency" (Noble 1993, p. 6). Another concern relates to the question of whether apparent differences in psychological

characteristics and responses are innately related to sex or whether they arise from the different ways men and women experience reality in their particular time, place, and culture. Defining gender as the psychological, social, and cultural features frequently associated with the biological categories of male and female, Cook (1993) states that the sexes are socialized to different attitudes toward achievement and relationships; because of these attitudes and social norms men and women experience different opportunities and expectations. Feminist critiques (Hayes 1989, Tisdell 1993) stress that socialization, unequal access to power, and educational systems predominantly based on the objective, linear, analytical type of thought typically associated with males have a number of effects: devaluing of emotions and relationships and lack of confidence and self-esteem in women.

Tisdell (1993) notes that men are generally socialized for leadership roles and an authoritative style, women to support and to take care of people. Social conventions define and approve what is "normal" and "natural" for each gender and then consistently devalue what is associated with the feminine (Collard and Stalker 1991). For example, Enns (1991) finds that traditional personality theories associate a "healthy" identity with dominant western cultural norms of achievement, individualism, success, and self-sufficiency, traits usually given masculine labels. However, the new models she reviews (such as Gilligan's relationship model and Belenky et al.'s "ways of knowing") can also be used to reinforce gender stereotypes, and they focus on changing the individual rather than the sociocultural context in which identity develops. Blundell (1993) also cautions that the idea of sex role expectations exaggerates the importance of individual attitudes and minimizes the economic and social forces to which individuals respond.

Bar-Yam (1991) argues strongly for the influence of social/cultural factors on psychological differences. Her study of how men and women make meaning of their world and experiences found no sex differences in the evolution of identity. The need to be distinct and the need to be attached contributed equally to development in both genders. For both women and men, the balance shifts between autonomy and interdependence, differentiation and integration. She suggests that the tendency to stay at one end of the scale or the other may be more related to social expectations, life experiences, and cultural values than to sex.

A positive contribution of the identification of "different voices" may be the validation of other perspectives. A more complete self-definition and picture of personality development for both genders would value both knowing through abstract reasoning and knowing through insights from experience, both moral action and moral thought (Kazemek 1989), both connectedness and independence.

Teaching and Learning: Blending All the Voices

If educational institutions are based on a model of one type of thought (rational, analytic), then those whose ways of thinking are more subjective or inductive may feel alienated in the learning environment. Women are asked "to learn the experiences of men and accept them as representative of all human experience" (Gallos 1992, p. 5). The "adversarial logic" of argument and counterargument that dominates many classrooms is foreign to many people's preferred learning styles (Collard and Stalker 1991, Gallos 1992), and academic learning is often separated from life experience, with the result that even highly competent, confident women experience self-doubt (Gallos 1992). Pearson (1992) suggests identifying students' individual learning style preferences and designing environments that allow for diversity of temperament, style, and culture, that balance challenge with support and build on students' strengths.

According to Belenky et al. (1986), some people are "separate" knowers, those who can approach knowledge objectively and reduce it to understandable parts. On the other hand, many women are "connected" knowers, who make sense of reality by relating new knowledge to experience in the context of relationships. Effective learning environments for connected knowers help them see themselves as creators of knowledge and builders of theory constructed from experience (Hayes 1989). "In experiential learning, the teacher facilitates a process where participants work to translate their experience into theory, and their theories into relevant information for real life exchanges" (Gallos 1992, p. 7).

Other ways to use knowledge of developmental differences to support adult learning include the

following: redesigning course content to include other perspectives and using seating arrangements that challenge the teacher's authority role (Tisdell 1993); using teaching methods that are cooperative, democratic, and collaborative, in which learners share power and authority in the teaching process (Hayes 1989); and valuing affective as well as cognitive forms of knowledge and requiring critical reflection on experience and the integration of theory with action.

Caffarella (1992) provides other instructional strategies that are related to the three themes she discerned in the literature on women's development: centrality of relationships, diverse and nonlinear life patterns, and intimacy and identity. These strategies include small group and panel discussions, facilitator demonstration and student practice of behaviors, case studies, role playing, telling one's story, metaphor analysis, critical incident technique, and structured experiences. Also based on this literature are her suggestions of ways to develop women as leaders in the workplace.

Conclusion

The approaches suggested for enhancing women's "different" ways of developing are remarkably similar to principles that are central to adult education: teaching and learning that are collaborative and reflective, social action and social change, validation and use of the life experiences adults bring to the classroom in the teaching/learning process. However, adult educators must "shift their concern from equal accessibility and opportunity to equal outcomes for women" (Collard and Stalker 1991, p. 79), restructuring the learning environment to empower all kinds of learners. For, if the developmental models do not fit all women's lives, there are also men who will not see themselves in these pictures. Caffarella (1992) says, "Women's voices are not just gender related, but also rooted in class, race, age, sexual orientation, and family status" (p. 13). This is also true of men, and all of the voices of difference demonstrate that adult lives are complex and varied. Multiple models that expand the definition of adulthood to include those who have been missing in traditional theories should be developed and used in teaching and counseling.

Caffarella concludes that acceptance of a range of voices allows for the ethic of caring as well as the ethic of justice; for valuing of feelings as well as objective data; for interdependence of thought and action to be considered as important as acting autonomously and independently; and for collaborative and cooperative ways of teaching and working to be used as often as those of individual direction and action.

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WOMEN, WORK, AND LITERACY
ERIC Digest No. 92 by S. Kerka
Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1989 (ED 312 456)

The basic skills requirements of the workplace are increasing; at the same time, women are entering the work force in larger numbers. Women's success in the labor force and their economic self-sufficiency depend upon both literacy improvement and employability training. This ERIC Digest, based on publications of Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), portrays the extent of the problem of illiteracy among women, looks at the changing work force and its literacy needs, and describes a program model developed by WOW to address this issue.

The Literacy Situation for Women

- An estimated 23 million adults in the United States lack basic literacy skills.
- An estimated 23 percent of all adult females have severely limited literacy skills (compared to 17 percent of all males).
- Seventy-five percent of female heads of households with less than a high school diploma are living in poverty.
- Young women with below average skills and below poverty incomes are five and one-half times more likely to become teen parents.
- Nearly 40 percent of female single parents and 35 percent of displaced homemakers have an eighth-grade education or less.
- Literacy levels of children are strongly linked to those of their parents.
- The greatest predictor of a child's future academic success is the literacy of the child's mother.
- As the numbers of families headed by low-literate women increase, the cycle of illiteracy is perpetuated.

The Changing Work Force

- By 2000, 80 percent of women aged 25-54 will be in the work force. Women will comprise 47 percent of the paid labor force. Two out of three new entrants to the labor force will be women.
- Minority women's labor force participation will increase—Hispanics by 85 percent and Blacks by 16 percent.
- At least two-thirds of all women with children under 18 will be in the labor force.
- One in eight women workers has less than a high school education—including one in two single mothers, 56 percent of displaced homemakers, one in three Hispanic women workers, and one in five Black women workers.
- Almost all of the jobs created by the year 2000 will be in the service sector.

Literacy Needs of the Work Force

- A majority of all new jobs will require education or training beyond high school.
- Only 27 percent of all new jobs will be low skilled.
- People with less than a high school education will be able to fill only 14 percent of all jobs.
- More jobs will require basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; higher order critical thinking skills; analytical and problem-solving skills; listening, speaking, and other communication skills; basic computer skills; and teamwork skills. (Imel 1989; Watson 1989; *Women, Work and Literacy* 1988)

Combining Literacy and Employment Training

The picture painted by these statistics—of the numbers of women (especially single mothers) with low literacy levels, of the increased labor force participation of women, and of the greater literacy needs of jobs—makes the case for the inclusion of a literacy component in employment programs for women. Linking literacy education to employment and training programs can be a significant factor in improving a woman's basic skills and laying a stronger foundation for increasing her employability. Such programs should strive to be: (1) comprehensive—meeting the specific needs of low-income and single mothers; (2) learner-centered—recognizing individual abilities, experiences, interests, and goals; (3) flexible; (4) standards-based; and (5) policy-linked—incorporating advocacy activities for public policy issues that will help shape literacy services.

Wider Opportunities for Women, an organization that seeks to expand employment opportunities for women through training, placement, and advocacy, developed a program model (Beck 1988, Hirschoff 1988) based on case studies of five literacy programs that focus on the needs of low-income single mothers. (Most of the model can also be used with low-literate women who are not mothers.)

The model attempts to attack the many internal and external barriers faced by women in need of both literacy and job training. Among the internal barriers are (1) low self-esteem, including past unhappy encounters with schooling, lack of family support for education, and lack of positive role models; (2) self-doubt about one's ability to learn, perhaps exacerbated by actual learning disabilities such as dyslexia; (3) powerlessness, including denial of existing barriers and inability to cope with institutions affecting one's life; and (4) guilt about taking time from their families for self-improvement.

External barriers may include: (1) environmental instability (housing problems, domestic and community violence, health and financial difficulties); (2) need for support services such as child care, transportation, emergency funds, or personal counseling; (3) inaccessible or inappropriate services—due to location, schedule, enrollment requirements, inflexible testing methods, or cost; and (4) failure to set realistic goals.

The Program Model

The steps of the model (assessing, shaping the program, getting started, delivering services, measuring impact, and advocating public policy changes) are influenced by research showing that the comprehensive needs of the woman and her family must be addressed in order to have success in both literacy and employment readiness.

Assessment of current programs and the community environment is necessary to define the population to be served, determine available resources, avoid possible duplication, and begin building a referral network for the comprehensive services clients will need. Potential sources of funding for literacy/job training should be identified (for example, the Adult Education Act, the Perkins Vocational Education Act, and the Job Training Partnership Act).

Shaping the program includes (1) setting standards to guide activities and measure impact (especially important is defining literacy and integrating the notion of literacy as a critical part of employment training into the program); (2) defining the client population; and (3) establishing a budget.

When getting started, recruitment, intake, and assessment are the important first contacts women will have with the program. Community-based recruitment is recommended, using a wide variety of strategies that stress the messages that training can lead to a better job and economic future and that a mother's literacy improvement can help her children's achievements. Intake—determining if the program is right for the woman and vice versa—and assessment to determine placement within the program should be sensitive to past educational experiences and test anxiety. Clients should be assisted in setting realistic short- and long-term goals.

In delivering services, there are several considerations. Program design should be learner-centered and reinforce self-concept. Staff roles include literacy instructors, counselors, recruiters, employment specialists, and child care specialists. Support services should either be provided by the program or through referral to another agency. Evaluation through testing and staff and student input should

aim at overcoming test anxiety while recognizing the existence of testing in employment situations. Rewards for student progress should be noncompetitive and nonhierarchical.

Content of a model program includes literacy components (individualized remediation plans, small groups, incremental goals, job-related reading, student-created materials, computer familiarity), employability components (job readiness, nontraditional skills training, job skills training, internships, on-the-job training, job search methods, job placement), and life skills components (program solving, decision making, and goal setting; personal and career counseling; support services).

Measuring program impact can be accomplished using standardized methods such as achievement test scores, job placement, and high school equivalency completion as well as nonstandardized methods such as participant questionnaires, focus groups, or exit interviews.

Another way to attack barriers is by advocating changes in public policy such as:

- Increased federal funds for literacy and basic skills initiatives
- Special efforts to ensure that women are equitably served in publicly funded programs
- Improved coordination among public systems of literacy service provision
- Expanded joint remedial programs for parents and children
- Authorized federal and state funds for the provision of support services
- Increased flexibility in eligibility criteria for service deliverers
- Provision of opportunities for welfare recipients to receive educational services in addition to employment and training activities
- Increased funding for research and demonstration projects in literacy instructional methods.

Beck (1988) and Hirschoff (1988) address some additional issues related to program development that particularly affect women. For example:

- Funding sources such as the Job Training Partnership Act and the Perkins Act authorize literacy education for those receiving vocational training. However, their definitions of program completion or success (e.g., job placement) may be premature for women who may need further education and training.
- Some women in the target population will be uncomfortable in formal schooling and testing situations. Standardized tests often contain sex, class, and race bias.
- Instructional materials should recognize cultural differences, be sex fair, and take women's daily experiences into account.
- Flexible approaches to absenteeism are needed due to the barriers that may hinder women's participation.
- Differences between teaching adults and teaching younger students should be recognized.

Low-income single mothers and other low-literate women face problems so overwhelming that they usually cannot focus on literacy as an isolated goal. Therefore, literacy must be one component of a comprehensive strategy that provides support services and employment training as well—all of which are necessary to enable these women to break the cycles of poverty and illiteracy.

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Reflection on Reading 2

- Explain ways in which external barriers—such as environmental instability, lack of support systems, and inaccessible or inappropriate services—might influence the structure of your program. Consider ways in which you might reduce any negative effects of these factors.

- Explain at least one major concern when attempting to define men and women as groups. How would this concern influence you to manage your program differently?

The following four articles present an array of viewpoints concerning multicultural issues. In developing your own approach to multiculturalism, you will need to consider these different perspectives, as well as the philosophical foundations of the workplace literacy program in which you are working.

"ADULT EDUCATION AND MULTICULTURALISM" by D. A. Manzo
In *The Pennsylvania Adult Basic Education Staff Handbook*, edited by T. Reiff, 39-40
Lancaster, PA: New Educational Projects, 1992 (ED 352 532)

The impact of multiculturalism on education is a major topic these days. As adult educators, we need to confront this issue as it relates to our educational settings.

According to the 1990 census, America's diversity is at its greatest. It is not limited to one section of the country, nor to the urban or rural environment. Unlike some countries, America does not relegate ethnic or racial groups to a particular location. Rather, we are a melting pot with a great awareness of individual ingredients.

Frequently, the adult educator has been one of the initial contacts for new immigrant groups entering the country. Adult education has long helped immigrants learn to cope with life in their new country. This is reason enough for adult education to confront the issue of multiculturalism.

The adult educator has the task of preparing people to become responsible members of American society. This includes appreciating not only the variety in America, but also the common elements we share, one of which, ironically, is the ability to appreciate cultural diversity.

We know that diversity of thought and experience makes the educational process stronger and richer for everyone involved. Yet, we also know that too much diversity, without a focus, can lead to fragmentation, loss of control, and obliteration of the educational goal. This extends to the transmission of American culture (goals, values, institutions, language) to new immigrants.

It is not uncommon for other countries to use adult education to facilitate the transmission of traditional values. So, it should not seem odd for American adult educators to facilitate an understanding of America's traditional values. After all, this is the culture which immigrants have entered and in which they must survive. A basic understanding and appreciation of it should not be viewed in a negative way.

> I think America, more than any other nation that ever existed, is a vision, a spiritual adventure, a desire for something better, a purpose, an inspiration, a determination, an enterprise . . . and I don't believe you can understand America unless you interpret it in those terms.
>
> — *Alexander Meiklejohn*, 1924

Adult educators must help individuals appreciate cultural diversity, but not at the expense of America's common cultural elements. Those are the elements that originally brought people to this country and are still held as ideal by new immigrants. The adult educator must find that delicate balance where students can retain and share what is best about their cultural heritage while assuring that each individual is socialized to the new responsibilities of being a member of American society.

"A Guide to Specific Cultural Differences in Hispanic Students" by S. De Carlo
In *The Pennsylvania Adult Basic Education Staff Handbook*, edited by T. Reiff, 40
Lancaster, PA: New Educational Projects, 1992 (ED 352 532)

A cultural group is defined as people with common origins, customs, language, and styles of living. The group has a sense of identity and a shared language. Their shared history and experiences shape the group's values, goals, expectations, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors from birth until death. We'll take a look at the more notable cultural considerations for working with Hispanic students.

Concept of space: People from the U.S. generally maintain a greater physical distance between themselves than do people from Hispanic cultures. Most literature (coming from an Anglo point of view) recommends explaining this cultural difference to Hispanic students and teaching the *culturally accepted distance*. From the Hispanic point of view, it would make more sense for the teacher to have a good understanding of the distance issue, *respect it*, teach the other way, and *accept* whichever distance emerges from the teaching.

Family: Hispanic cultures have extended families in which extremely close ties exist among relatives. This concept extends to the number of relatives living in the same household. By the same token, it is not unusual for family members to come along to classes. The ESL teacher can encourage family members not only to come along, but also to enroll in the class.

Concept of time: In Spanish, "the clock walks" (i.e., *el reloj anda*); in English, "the clock runs." The Hispanic students is conditioned to perceive time as a more casual entity. It is important to explain to students that in the U.S., a lack of punctuality is considered irresponsible.

Dates: It is customary in Spanish to place the day before the month (e.g., *10 de febrero de 1992*). This convention causes cultural misinterpretation when a number is substituted for the name of the month (e.g., 10-2-92). Since in the U.S., the first number in the date is identified with the month, the English speaker would identify 10-2-92 as October 2, 1992 instead of February 10, 1992. Many times, the Hispanic student is aware of the difference and will accommodate the English speaker by placing the month first. The teacher is thus left to guess whether the student has used the English or Spanish sequence.

Family names: In the Hispanic culture, a child takes the family name of the father followed by the family name of the mother: David Gomez Martinez. The Hispanic student becomes confused by school forms that ask solely for the "last name"; therefore, he uses the maternal name instead of the paternal. The principle behind this custom is that showing both family names signifies that the child is not illegitimate and the father has recognized the child as his own. In the U.S., the full name is written out in the reverse—David Martinez Gomez—if at all. The maternal name is usually left out, unless the mother's maiden name is specifically asked for.

For a woman, there is a change of family name at the time of marriage. She replaces the maternal family name with the paternal family name of her husband, sometimes preceded by the word *de* (of). For example, when Rosa Martinez Gomez marries José Rivera Hernandez, her name changes to Rosa Martinez de Rivera. If a Hispanic woman is living in the U.S., she might delete the preposition *de* and just write it out as Rosa Martinez Rivera. When the couple has children, the entire process starts again.

First names: It is not uncommon for Hispanic persons to have a compound first name such as José Luis or Ana Maria. We must at all times use *both* names and not take for granted that they want it shortened to José or Maria. Many times within the same family, all the boys have the same first name, José, but the second name is different, so if we drop that second name, we will wonder about this family naming all their boys José. Also, let's not assume that José is Joe in English or that it's OK to starting calling a student by an English-equivalent name.

"IS YOUR PROGRAM CULTURALLY SENSITIVE?" by D. W. Fluke
In *The Pennsylvania Adult Basic Education Staff Handbook*, edited by T. Reiff, 39
Lancaster, PA: New Educational Projects, 1992 (ED 352 532)

Most arguments for and against "multicultural education" deal with extremes. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. says, "The point of America was not to preserve old cultures but to forge a new, *American* culture." On the other hand, a report by the Task Force on Minorities says, "African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Puerto Rican/Latinos and Native Americans have all been the victims of an intellectual and educational oppression that has characterized the culture and institutions of the United States and the European American world for centuries."

Few adult education programs in Pennsylvania develop instructional and program-management routines around a multicultural awareness. After all, our goal is to prepare the adult learners in our programs to "take their place in society." However, with increased national emphasis on what is politically correct" and "multiculturally fair," each program must take some time to look at whether some social and ethnic considerations need to receive greater attention.

Shifting from a traditional, teacher-based instructional mode to drawing thematic content from the cultures of the participants and replacing teacher lectures with discussion groups (called "culture circles" by multiculturalists) characterizes the gradual shift in adult education instruction to that which is culturally meaningful in teaching adult learners to respect and value diversity.

Bonnie Benard, in a paper from the Northwest Regional Learning Laboratory, sums it up:

> Essential to living and working in increasingly culturally diverse schools, workplaces, and communities is a perspective that cultural diversity is not a problem or crisis, but rather an incredibly exciting opportunity enabling every American to experience other people's cultures.

It is not mutually exclusive to apply characteristics of multicultural education while continuing to teach adult learners basic skills essential to their success in a melting-pot society. Indeed, it is our obligation to teach adults to develop the attitudes, behaviors, and skills necessary to participate successfully in their own as well as in a varied cultural society.

"ADDRESSING WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND CROSS CULTURAL ISSUES"
In *Workplace Literacy Development Guide for Employers*, 18-19
Seattle, WA: Seattle-King County Private Industry Council, October 1992 (ED 359 835)

Workplace literacy classes must also address issues of workforce diversity and cross cultural differences as communication and interaction skills are closely intertwined with culture. Many workplace problems stem from issues of diversity. These include the inability of workers to appropriately interpret the culture of the workplace, and the difficulty many lead staff, supervisors, and coworkers have working with people from different backgrounds.

Examples include:

- In some cultures, making direct eye contact is considered disrespectful, particularly if the other person is a figure of authority or of higher status. In contrast, the lack of eye contact in this culture is a negative sign.
- Decision making processes vary by culture as they may often vary by company. Many companies have implemented group decision making processes or quality circles. While some

cultural groups may be comfortable with group decisions or decisions by consensus, they may be reluctant to correct a co-worker or give an opposing viewpoint in front of others.

- Language is further complicated by direct and indirect styles of communication. Some cultures find it impolite to directly state a problem or to express a need. An individual might, for example, ask another individual if he was hot as a way to suggest that the air conditioning should be turned on.
- Cultural differences also affect such things as asking questions or asking for clarification, making suggestions, giving criticism, being able to speak positively about one's own skills and attributes during job interviews and/or responding to performance appraisals, etc.

As some of these examples show, non-verbal communication, or body language, can play an important role in workplace literacy programs, especially when covering information about the workplace culture. Workers learning about this culture, whether limited English speakers or native English speakers, need an opportunity to observe behavior associated with the culture and to practice this behavior in a "safe", non-judgmental environment. Exercises to heighten awareness of body language and non-verbal communication should promote understanding that behavior differs from culture to culture and that the differences can be as difficult and confusing as the differences in spoken language.

A simple illustration of a useful and "fun" exercise is as follows:

Materials:

Large cards or charts with words written on them that reflect the different messages that the teacher wants the workers to become aware of, e.g.:

Unhappy	Preoccupied	Frustrated
Indifferent	Worried	Angry
Pleased	Sad	Busy
Excited	Dissatisfied	Confused

Or cards/charts can state instructions:

Come here	Keep working
Do it later	Watch out
Work harder	Put it here/there
Stop	Start
Stay here	

In addition to these cards, the teacher should have cards for each culture represented:

- American
- Cambodian
- Eastern Europe

Exercise:

1. Make sure to review the meaning of the word on the card before starting.
2. Set up the American card so workers understand that the first demonstration is about Americans.
3. Teacher strikes a pose that represents one of the words on the cards. Class should guess which word is being demonstrated.
4. After about four tries, switch countries and have workers demonstrate a word while the teacher and other students from other cultures guess which card the pose matches.

The purpose of this exercise is to begin a discussion of the subtleties of communication and culture. The focus should not be on teaching gestures or how Americans "act." It should provoke them to begin to question the communication behind the words with an understanding that their own experience, backgrounds, and culture may not give them all of the information they need.

The exercise should be playful and the teacher willing to improvise depending on how sophisticated the workers appear to be during discussion.

Reflection on Reading 3

- Do you believe that workplace literacy programs should be a vehicle for transmitting traditional American values? Why or why not?

- Describe two specific cultural differences in Hispanic students and ways in which they may influence your program.

- What is one way to make your program more culturally sensitive? Describe how you would implement this improvement.

- What are some cultural differences you may find in the workplace and what type of problems might they cause? How could you avoid these problems?

TEACHING ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES
ERIC Digest No. 99 by C. Lowry
Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1990 (ED 321 156)

Adult educators concur that youngsters with learning disabilities (LD) do not simply outgrow them. They become adults with LD, and many of them participate in adult education programs. This ERIC DIGEST discusses the number of adult learners with LD, identifies relevant issues, describes intervention strategies, and suggests specific techniques that adult educators can use with their LD students.

Incidence

The number of adults with LD in adult education is not easy to estimate because extrapolating from the number of school children receiving LD services (4.84 percent in 1987-88) may result in a fair estimate of learning disabled adults in the population but not of those in adult education.

Adults with LD may comprise as many as 80 percent of the students in adult basic education programs (Ross 1987), but a smaller percentage of students in other adult education settings, such as corporate training programs and continuing education, are estimated to have LD (Ross-Gordon 1989).

Teachers may observe the following characteristics in adult learners who have LD (HEATH Resource Center 1989):

- Pronounced difficulty with reading, writing, spelling, and number concepts, although other skills are average to superior
- Poorly formed handwriting that may be printing instead of script and that may have uneven spacing between words
- Difficulty in listening to a lecture and taking notes at the same time
- Severe difficulty in sticking to simple schedules, repeatedly forgetting things and losing things
- Confusion about up and down and right and left
- Excessive anxiety, anger, or depression because of frustration when coping with social situations
- Misinterpretation of the subtleties in language, tone of voice, or social situations

Nonetheless, Ross-Gordon (1989) points out that many adults with LD exhibit strengths that enable them to compensate for their disabilities and to perform successfully even without supportive services.

Issues

Among the most serious issues concerning adults with LD are the lack of an agreed-upon definition of LD and the scarcity of competent assessment tools to identify adults who have them.

Definition

Since the term learning disability was first used in 1963 (Ross 1987), most definitions of LD have been developed to describe children in academic contexts, rather than to describe adults in a variety of work and personal life settings. That is true even of the definition of learning disability most often cited, which was accepted for the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Ross-Gordon 1989).

A definition that does stress the lifelong impact of LD and its potential effects on multiple aspects of a person's life was approved by the Association for Children and Adults with LD in 1986. It defines specific LD as a chronic condition of presumed neurological origin, which selectively interferes with the development, integration, and/or demonstration of verbal and nonverbal abilities.

Specific LD, the definition says, exists as a distinct handicapping condition and varies in its manifestations and in degrees of severity. The definition states that the condition can affect self-esteem, education, vocation, socialization, and daily living activities ("ACLD Description" 1986).

As that definition reflects, the theories of LD that have prevailed assume that individuals with LD have difficulty learning because of some difference in information processing (Ross-Gordon 1989). That difference is assumed to have a neurological basis. Recent brain research has substantiated the neuropsychological theory of LD, even though the neurological basis of individual LDs cannot be verified by current assessment procedures (ibid.).

Assessment

When thinking about the assessment of adults with LD, Ross-Gordon (1989) suggests, adult educators should be aware of the scarcity of diagnostic tools appropriate for adults, the importance of enlisting the adults' assistance in the assessment process, and the fact that assessment is useful only to the extent that it helps adults live more fully.

She recommends that testing be used only as part (and perhaps not the most important part) of a comprehensive assessment process. The assessment process is more beneficial when the adult contributes information about personal goals and learning strengths and weaknesses. Not only is the information itself important, but shifting the process from testing to discovery and problem solving increases the adult's involvement and can decrease the negative aspects of testing (Ross-Gordon 1989).

Using assessment instruments to find out whether an adult student has LD has limited value if the information gleaned cannot be acted upon by, for instance, arranging instruction to help the student learn or making him or her eligible for resources or services. That is, the advantages of having identified an LD student must be weighed against the negative effects of testing and labeling. Ross (1987) encourages adult educators to ask themselves how they can use more sophisticated educational practices to meet the needs of learners without assigning labels.

Intervention Strategies

Ross-Gordon (1989) categorizes intervention strategies for adults with LD according to their goals:

- Basic skills remediation, the model often used in adult basic education
- Subject-area tutoring, such as preparation for the General Educational Development test
- Compensatory modification that involves changing the environment or the conditions under which learning takes place or helping the adult develop alternative means of accomplishing a goal
- Cognitive or learning strategies training (learning to learn)
- Instruction in survival skills
- Vocational exploration and training

Because no single approach has been demonstrated as ideal, designers of programs often combine two or more approaches (Ross 1987). Teachers can make the most of a student's own pattern of learning strengths and weaknesses by combining skill building, compensatory techniques, and learning strategies.

Teaching Techniques

As with intervention strategies, no single set of teaching techniques is likely to meet the needs of all adults with LD. The following techniques have been suggested (Clearinghouse on Adult Education and Literacy 1989; Ross 1987, 1988; Ross-Gordon 1989).

Learning Style

- Assess individuals' learning styles and teach to the stronger modality or style.
- Use multisensory techniques when teaching groups.
- Create opportunities for concrete and experiential learning as well as for abstract and reflective learning.
- Make abstract concepts more concrete by having students handle materials, relating new information to everyday life, and demonstrating tasks.
- Teach new concepts concretely because it is often easier for LD students to learn the theory after learning its practical applications.

Student Motivation

- Talk to students about what techniques work best.
- Use language experience approaches and materials from their home and work environments.
- Build on students' strengths.

- Give frequent, positive, and explicit feedback.
- Help students recognize success.

Learning Strategies

- Teach transferable strategies such as listening, paraphrasing, SQ3R (survey, question, read, recite, review), error monitoring, note-taking methods, sentence combining, and paragraph organizing.
- Teach memory techniques such as chunking and mnemonics.
- Discuss the situations in which the strategies will be useful and discuss which strategies will be useful across situations.

Compensation

- Teach techniques such as tape recording and word processing, use computer-assisted instruction, and develop aids students can carry with them (such as a list of number words they will need to write checks).
- Encourage students to obtain note-takers, readers, tutors, and recorded texts.

Organization

- Help students identify organizational patterns.
- Make clear transitions from one topic or task to another.
- Use color coding whenever possible.
- Break lessons into manageable parts.
- Help students set realistic goals.
- Make directions specific, concrete, and understandable.
- Make changes in the schedule, assignments, or examinations orally and in writing.
- As a check for accuracy, have the student repeat verbally what has been taught.

References

This ERIC Digest is based on the following publication:

Ross-Gordon, J. M. "Adults with Learning Disabilities: An Overview for the Adult Educator." Information Series No. 337. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1989. (ED 315 664)

Additional References

"ACLD Description: Specific Learning Disabilities." *ACLD Newsbriefs* (September-October 1986).

Clearinghouse on Adult Education and Literacy. "Instructional Strategies for Adults with Learning Disabilities." Washington, DC: Division of Adult Education and Literacy, U.S. Department of Education, 1989.

HEATH Resource Center. "Resources for Adults with Learning Disabilities." Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1989. (ED 311 671)

Ross, J. M. "Learning and Coping Strategies of Learning Disabled ABE Students." *Adult Literacy and Basic Education* v12/n2 (1988): 78-90.

Ross, J. M. "Learning Disabled Adults: Who Are They and What Do We Do with Them?" *Lifelong Learning* v11/n3 (November 1987): 4-7, 11.

"DEALING WITH ADULT LEARNING DISABILITIES" by R. J. Cooper
In *The Pennsylvania Adult Basic Education Staff Handbook*, edited by T. Reiff, 17-18
Lancaster, PA: New Educational Projects, 1992 (ED 352 532)

Many adults enrolled in adult basic education and literacy programs had difficulty in school because of learning problems. Adult students require less labeling and more understanding of their perceiving, processing, and communicating differences.

Through testing and/or observation, teachers can determine if students have learning differences. Testing for learning problems is ideal because the specific characteristics of the difficulties can be determined. However, even where specialized testing is not available, teachers can observe manifestations of learning disabilities and, if they have some knowledge of the specific manifestations of learning problems, can use their observations to modify instruction to accommodate problems.

Students can be divided into three general groups: those without learning problems, those with mild or moderate learning problems, and those with severe learning problems. Students who do not have problems can receive instruction via traditional methods, while students who have learning problems of varying degrees need varying degrees of accommodations and/or alternative techniques. For example, a student who has an auditory processing problem may not be able to distinguish the subtle differences in phonetic sounds. A student who has a right/left problem may have difficulty learning rules which have exceptions.

Learning problems can be identified and grouped in many ways. A useful way to group some of the problems which affect adults is to identify them as they affect a student's performance:

- Visual processing (e.g., skipping words and lines)
- Auditory processing (mishearing sounds)
- Right/left discrimination (reversals)
- The racing mind (distractable)
- Concrete thinking (requiring models and examples)
- Ambiguous vocabulary (limits comprehension)
- Organizational problems (time, object, or thoughts)
- Sequencing (following logical order)
- Motor problems (poor handwriting, clumsy)

The type of processing problem can be matched with instructional techniques which fit well with the student's manner of thinking. A problem with auditory processing might require that a student learn reading and spelling skills using alternative (nonphonetic) decoding techniques. Reversals require weighted learning or mnemonics.

Some learning problems are better handled through accommodations. For example, a student with a reading problem should be allowed to take an oral exam to assess his or her knowledge of science while, of course, a test of reading should include reading. A student who reverses often should not be required to answer true or false questions. Determining when an accommodation should be given should be based on the severity of the student's problem.

Learning problems often cause years of failure and poor self-esteem. Therefore, teachers must be vigilant in avoiding frustration amplified by past failures. Breaking tasks into small parts and adequate repetition of developing skills build success and confidence.

Counseling should be provided to help students with social and life skills, as the characteristics listed above cause both learning and living problems. We are all aware of how poor language skills affect completing a job application, but many functional ares can also be affected. For example, a person who does not know when to stop talking or makes decisions with insufficient information experiences many living problems.

Avoidance is the most disabling aspect of having a learning difference. If a person has difficulty with a skill such as reading, then reading will not be a priority activity. When given a choice of how to obtain the news, the person will turn on a radio or television rather than pick up a newspaper. When a person has difficulty reading maps, the person will ask for directions rather than study maps.

Adult basic education teachers need to learn more about the characteristics of learning problems and the manifestations in academic and social functioning. Instructional materials should incorporate alternative techniques so that students can choose the method which makes the most sense to them. At the beginning of this century, we began to recognize individual differences with the development of intelligence tests. An understanding of learning styles was a natural outgrowth of the identification of individual differences. Now we can take the next step and refine our educational techniques to match the neurological processing of individuals who differ significantly from the norm.

Reflection on Reading 4

- List seven characteristics that may indicate that a student has a learning disability.
- Why might it be more difficult to diagnose learning disabilities in adults than in children? What implications does this have for you in your role as a workplace instructor?

APPLICATION ACTIVITY

The Context of Workplace Literacy: The Learner

- Review an existing program structure and one or more selected lesson plans for a workplace literacy program.
- Identify specific ways of modifying the selected program structure and lesson plans to make them more appropriate for the wide range of learners in such programs.
- For each modification, indicate the type of learner it is designed to assist and your rationale for selecting it.

TOPIC: The Context of Workplace Literacy: The Learner

Evaluation Guidelines

Directions: Check your competency with the following criteria:

Learner Self-Check Did you—		Review Checklist Did the learner—
☐	1. Identify specific ways to modify the program structure that would— a. create a more non-threatening environment for adults?	☐
☐	b. make the program more gender-equitable?	☐
☐	c. eliminate or reduce internal or external barriers learners might face in participating or succeeding in the program?	☐
☐	2. Identify specific ways of modifying the lesson plan to provide activities that would— a. allow adult learners to be self-directing and to build on their existing strengths and experiences?	☐
☐	b. present adults with life-, task-, and problem-centered situations tied to their real concerns?	☐
☐	c. recognize the positive value of learners' cultural diversity?	☐
☐	d. offer a variety of learning routes to meet the needs of all learners, including those who are educationally disadvantaged or learning disabled?	☐

Learner: _____

Reviewer: _____

Level of Performance: If the evaluation results indicate a need for further competency development—or if the learner wishes to pursue the topics covered in further breadth or depth—please refer to the supplementary resources described in the Annotated Bibliography, which follows.

Bempechat, J., and Ginsburg, H. P. *Underachievement and Educational Disadvantage: The Home and School Experience of At-Risk Youth.* Urban Diversity Series No. 99. New York, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, November 1989. (ED 315 485)

Research on academic achievement and high risk students over the past 30 years indicates that the home, the school, or the community can be the source of insufficient educational experiences that contribute to educational disadvantage. About 30 percent of the present school population is estimated to be at risk of failure, and demographic projections predict a dramatic increase in the poor and minority school-age populations that largely comprise this group. This document comprises a review of the demographic factors associated with educational disadvantage and school failure, the scope and nature of problem behaviors associated with school failure, and educational programs and practices that appear to be effective in increasing the cognitive development of high risk students. Further research would benefit from attention to definition and measurement of risk factors, and from the use of ethnographic research methods. A list of 178 references is appended. (FMW)

Fine, M. G.; Johnson, F. L.; and Ryan, M. S. "Cultural Diversity in the Workplace." *Public Personnel Management* v19/n3 (Fall 1990): 305-319.

This article reports on a study of gender and race issues in the regional office of a federal agency. After setting their own research agenda of salient issues, employees completed a long, closed-ended questionnaire; a smaller sample also responded to ten open-ended questions. The results suggest that men, women, and people of color in the agency do not share a common culture of organizational life; instead, each group organizes its experience in the agency in different ways. The authors suggest that a theoretical perspective in which gender and race are viewed as cultures provides a useful framework for understanding cultural diversity in the workplace and a necessary starting point for managing a diverse workforce.

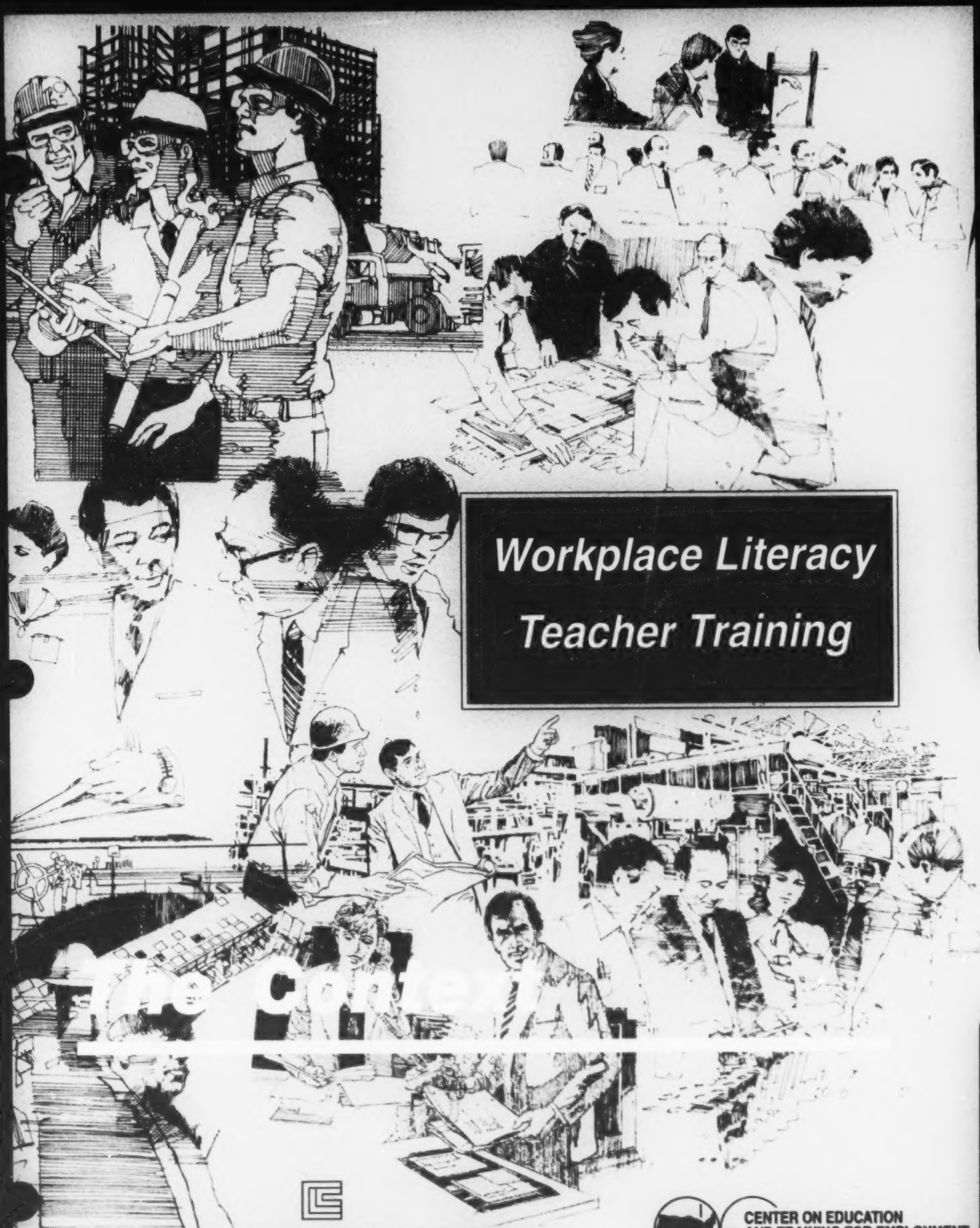
Nash, A.; Cason, A.; Rhum, M.; McGrail, L.; and Gomez-Sanford, R. *Talking Shop: A Curriculum Sourcebook for Participatory Adult ESL.* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1992. (ED 356-687)

Powell, G. N. "Male/Female Work Roles: What Kind of Future?" *Personnel* v66/n7 (July 1989): 47-50.

What will determine male and female roles in the future. The author identifies three critical forces—equal opportunity, socialization experiences, and work and family issues—that are likely to influence workplace roles and discusses these forces.

Zeiss, T., and Thomas-Wilson-Robertson, E. "Literacy: America's Great Deficit. In *Creating a Literate Society: College-Business-Community Partnerships*, edited by T. Zeiss. Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1991. (ED 331 546)

Brief descriptions are provided of 16 model literacy initiatives undertaken by community colleges in conjunction with local businesses or community groups. Following introductory comments by Barbara Bush, Tony Zeiss, H. James Owen, and Roy Romer, the authors review trends affecting the workforce, including demographic changes, population migration, access to education and jobs, workplace diversity, women and minorities in the work force, and urban problems. The bulk of the report consists of project descriptions, outlining the unique features, funding sources, operations, and outcomes. In the concluding chapters, T. Zeiss and R. M. Ady consider literacy and work force development as major challenges. (PAA)



Workplace Literacy Teacher Training

The Instructor

COLLEGE OF LAKE COUNTY

CENTER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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The Context of Workplace Literacy: The Instructor

Introduction

The quality of a workplace literacy program depends very essentially on the instructor. This learning guide discusses the responsibilities of a workplace literacy instructor and the characteristics that make an instructor successful in a workplace program.

Workplace literacy instructors should possess empathy, warmth, creativity, and, above all, flexibility. An administrator of a national workplace research and development project looks for—

> . . . maturity, commitment, a willingness to listen, a pragmatic and persistent approach to developing curriculum, high standards, respect for the complexity of the lives of adult learners in the workplace, sensitivity to politics and privacy, and people who are not inclined as a first response to say, "That hasn't been done before; it won't work." Good workplace instructors figure out how to make it work.[1]

Workplace literacy instructors should have experience in teaching basic skills to adults, subject-area expertise, experience teaching in a workplace literacy context, familiarity with adult learning theory, cultural sensitivity, and a knowledge of unions. They should be able to—

- provide training in an applied context,
- use varied types of teaching strategies,
- work within the company culture,
- use non-school-based instructional methods,
- develop and modify curricula in unfamiliar subjects,
- be sensitive to workers' needs and concerns,
- be aware of the skills workers use in their jobs as well as in their personal lives, and
- use varied instructional techniques to accommodate different learning styles.

The responsibilities of workplace literacy instructors are varied and complex, often going well beyond those of the typical classroom teacher because of the strong applications focus. Some guiding principles of teaching and learning that they should be able to address include—

- using a process that is characterized by a respect among participants for each other's self-worth;
- facilitating learning that is collaborative in regard to its what, why, and how;
- providing learning opportunities whose content and processes bear a perceived and meaningful relationship to learners' past experiences and immediate needs;

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1. D. MacMaster, "Communication and Collaboration: The Role of the Teacher in the Workplace Classroom," paper presented at the Annual Conference of Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, September 1993, p. 2.

- fostering a learning environment that minimizes anxiety and encourages freedom to experiment;
- creating learning experiences that are practical and problem centered;
- providing constant feedback of learner progress;
- developing or using curriculum that is organized by job tasks, not by discrete basic skills;
- using job materials as the basis for instructional tasks; and
- using curriculum that spans all the domains of learning.[2]

In addition to developing curriculum, workplace literacy instructors may need to serve as negotiators, facilitators, and as a mentor to other instructors. And, of course, they must evaluate learner progress, deliver instruction, determine needs of individuals, help students set short- and long-term goals, maintain an inventory of materials and equipment, and provide students with feedback.

The instructor also has a role in creating the learning environment. The attitude and behaviors of the instructor can do much to facilitate how learners will feel about the learning experience. The physical environment will also have an effect on students. The instructor should do everything possible to ensure that programs are held—

- on site (preferably) or, at a minimum, in a nearby, easily accessed facility; and
- in a space that has enough tables and comfortable chairs to accommodate the learners.

The area should also be well lit, clean, neat, and quiet. If equipment is used in the program, there should be enough to accommodate the largest group.

Clear communication between the workplace literacy instructor and learners is a critical factor. What the instructor says is filtered by how it's said, when it's said, and where it's said. Communication with the company regarding the general progress of the program, whether directly or indirectly through a workplace literacy coordinator is also an instructor responsibility. Communication should take place on a regular basis and the use of educational jargon should be avoided.

It is not unusual for an employer to want to know the progress of an individual worker or names of those doing well or poorly in the class or how "well" they tested. When communicating with the employer, do not deliberately or inadvertently breach the confidentiality between you and the student. Employers may wish to use information gained from the program for purposes of promotion or, conversely, for nonpromotion, layoffs, and demotions. The workplace literacy program must not be drawn into these proceedings. For the same reasons, learners should not be grouped according to their ability, as this may unintentionally provide information to the employer, also.

The readings in this learning guide will provide further information on these topics.

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2. B. A. Macaulay, K. Rentsch, R. Schwendeman, and J. Jackson, *Agency Partnership Based Orientation Program for Workplace Educators* (Malden, MA: Massachusetts Department of Education, October 1993).

Objectives

- Assess your readiness to perform as a workplace literacy instructor (roles, attributes, ethics).
- Identify the characteristics of an effective learning environment for adults.
- Analyze strategies for improving listening skills to determine the potential benefits and disadvantages of each.
- Identify legal issues that must be considered in testing learners' literacy levels.
- Make and justify program decisions in keeping with established instructional ethics.

To Help You Meet the Objectives

- Study the material that follows:

  Reading 1: The Effective Instructor as a Behavior Model and Change Agent

  Reading 2: Setting the Climate for Effective Teaching and Learning

  Arranging the Instructional Setting

  Reading 3: Communication and the Instructor

  Reading 4: Legal Considerations Concerning Literacy Testing in the Workplace

- Reflect on the questions posed after each reading. The questions are designed to help you clarify and extract meaning from the reading that can be helpfully applied. There are benefits to both individual and interactive reflection—
  - As an individual, consider how you would apply the information either in the program to which you are already assigned or in a program to which you might be assigned.
  - If you are able to discuss these questions with other instructors or program staff, try to get other perspectives on the reading. Compare notes on the ways the ideas can be and have been applied in their experience. If the experiences differ, help each other probe the possible reasons for the differences.
- Complete the Application Activity.
- Evaluate your own competencies using the Evaluation Guidelines. This is an opportunity to assess your own learning and identify any areas in which you feel less competent or confident. If indicated or desired, take advantage of the opportunity to review the related material in the Annotated Bibliography. You may also want to seek out a more experienced person who can be a mentor to you on this topic, helping you assess your competency and acting as a resource person.
- Ask your reviewer to evaluate your skills also. Be sure to note the input from the reviewer that can provide the basis for your further competency building.

To Help the Reviewer Guide and Evaluate Learner Performance

These learning guides have been designed to allow for maximum flexibility of use. For those individuals using them for professional development (without ties to a formal program), the guides allow for self-study. Such use may, however, limit the opportunity for interaction and practice in a group setting. Therefore, if learners are completing these guides in a group setting under your direction, it is strongly recommended that you identify such opportunities and capitalize upon them.

Reflection questions at the end of each Reading and an Application Activity and Evaluation Guidelines at the end of each learning guide provide opportunities for you, as a reviewer, to monitor learner progress and evaluate learner performance on the workplace literacy knowledge and skills being developed. However, your expectations should be based somewhat on the learner's background (e.g., previous instructional experience) and the learner's progress in the program. Individuals with previous experience as instructors in workplace literacy programs should be expected to extend their thinking and activities beyond the level expected of those without such experience.

For example, if the learner is asked to "define company culture," individuals ***without*** instructional experience would be expected to respond solely on the basis of their reflections concerning the readings provided within the guide. The responses expected of individuals with instructional experience, however, should go beyond the readings, incorporating their real-world experiences as well. Likewise, as individuals complete more and more of the learning guides, their work should reflect that progress. Knowledge and skills gained in earlier guides should be ***integrated*** into their reflections and activities as they work through later guides.

Flexibility can also be provided concerning how the learner will demonstrate competency. At a minimum, the learner should submit ***written*** descriptions, definitions, and explanations to demonstrate successful completion of the Application Activity. These should be evaluated—by both you and the learner—using the criteria provided in the Evaluation Guidelines. If feasible, however, you should also arrange to meet with the learner to discuss his or her written documentation. At that time, you could also pose hypothetical or actual situations related to the skill criteria and ask the learner how he or she would handle those situations. Another possibility would be to ask individuals to perform the skill as part of a presentation or demonstration to others in the class or group.

It is also desirable that, whenever possible, you and the learner identify opportunities for expanding on the learning experiences presented in the guide—ways for the learner to apply the learning more deeply and broadly. The question, "What plans do you have for learning more about the skill covered in this guide?" could well be a standard one. In many cases, the learner can use his or her work in the Application Activity as a building block for further exploration.

In summary, the learning situation is not one in which strict criterion-referenced standards based on percentage attainment or mastery levels are suitable, nor would one mode of demonstration be feasible—or appropriate—for everyone. You and the learner should discuss and reach agreement in advance on the level of achievement expected and mode of demonstration to be used so as to create the optimal learning experience. The intent is for the learner's professional development to be competency-based, rigorous, and designed to motivate further learning, yet sensibly adapted to the situation and to the learner's needs and abilities. Hopefully, the learners will carry this flexible philosophy and approach into their own workplace literacy programs.

"THE EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTOR AS A BEHAVIOR MODEL AND CHANGE AGENT"
In *Delivering Instruction to Adult Learners* by J. A. Cantor, 1-11
Toronto, Ontario: Wall and Emerson, 1992

Your role as an instructor is to be a leader, helper, guide, change agent, coordinator, and facilitator of learning.

The goal of this book is to provide information necessary to assist you to achieve an important goal: "To teach unto others as you would have others teach unto you." This book is designed to provide you with the essential knowledge and information to develop the personal and professional behaviors necessary to become an effective instructor. This first chapter describes and discusses specific personal attributes that instructors should possess, as well as their professional roles and responsibilities, and culminates with ten principles to guide you in becoming an effective instructor, i.e., a behavior model and change agent for your learners. A clear understanding of these personal attributes, roles, and responsibilities will assist you in accomplishing your instructional objectives while building your learners' self-esteem.

The basic principles for instructing adults described in this book are based upon the science of andragogy. This term, *andragogy*, refers to adult-centered education (Knowles 1984). Whereas the Greek root words for pedagogy mean "leading children," andragogy means "leading adults."

What Is an Instructor?

You are an adult responsible for instructing other adults. With the best of intentions, you wish to motivate and lead people to learn. Imagine for a moment that you are a learner in your own class. Do you, as a learner, like the way you, as an instructor are teaching?

A Behavior Model

As an instructor you are often the first person in your organization to establish contact with a learner. Learners tend to be at an impressionable stage in their careers. In such a situation they seek out a behavior model, someone they can imitate and after whom they can pattern their new behavior (Rosenbaum and Baker 1989). Learners will watch the way you conduct yourself in the classroom and in the laboratory. They will keenly observe your mannerisms, speech, teaching style, and personal habits. The behavior model which an instructor provides will live on long after he or she leaves. Therefore the legacy must be as constructive and positive as possible.

A Change Agent

All instructors share a unique opportunity to act as "change agents." The concept of change agent is very important in the field of adult education and training. As an instructor of adults, your major responsibility is to instill a desired set of behaviors in your learners by providing guidance, support, direction, and suggestions. In your classes, you will discuss, demonstrate, critique, and sometimes lecture. Your learners will learn new information and skills, new ways of behaving and acting: in other words, you will function as a change agent for your learners.

How then, would you, as a learner, like to learn from you, as an instructor? How can you be an effective behavior model and change agent for your learners? You, as a learner, want to be in an exciting and intellectually stimulating learning environment. You need and want to learn information which is interesting as well as applicable to your real-world situation. You like to participate and problem solve in a spirit of mutual inquiry. You wish to feel free to seek encouragement and assistance when necessary without being embarrassed. You require feedback and recognition for your contributions. You also need to judge your own progress. Therefore, you want your instructor to be a leader, a facilitator, and not merely a caretaker.

A Goal for Instructors

Make it your goal to instruct the way you would want to be taught. Strive to be a leader—a catalyst and change agent in an atmosphere of informal and respectful collaboration. Your major responsibility is to facilitate and encourage learning. Mutual planning and work by both you and your learners should drive the learning process. Help your learners set goals for themselves, and then enable them to achieve them. Accept your learners as they are, and use their experiences and learning history as a foundation upon which to build. Recognize that the learning speed of each learner will differ. If you can allow enough time so that the individual learning needs of all learners can be met, all can find learning satisfying. Help them succeed! Strive to reach the goal: "Teach unto others as you would have other teach unto you" (National Fire Academy, n.d.).

Attributes of an Effective Instructor

We can all recall one or more special instructors who have influenced us. In order for you to become an effective instructor, try to decide why these people were so special. Take a moment and think about those attributes that made one or more of your instructors so outstanding. [The figure that follows] displays some of your possible responses.

Attributes of an Effective Instructor

Possible responses:

- What qualities did this individual possess?

  Patience — Kindness

  Love of subject — Fairness

  Good speaker

- What do you remember most about this person?

  Good sense of humor

  Knowledge of subject

  Made subject understandable

  Helped me

  Answered my questions

  Seemed to care

Source: National Fire Academy, 1989

Now let's take a closer look at what special attributes you, as an instructor should bring to your adult learners. There are certain basic requirements we all must meet in order to teach.

- Instructors care about their subject.
- They have attained basic competence in their subject.
- They want to share their knowledge.

In addition to these basic requirements, organizations such as the American Society for Training and Development (1983), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (1982), National Fire Academy (1989), and others who sponsor training programs, collectively cite several basic characteristics of effective instructors. Many of these characteristics are suggested by recent research (Robbins 1990), and will be presented in the following sections.

Based on my two decades of instructional experience, I like to sum up what a successful instructor possesses this way: (1) knowledge of oneself; (2) knowledge of the learner; (3) knowledge of the subject; (4) knowledge of appropriate instructional techniques; and, (5) knowledge of administrative requirements and ethical responsibilities.

Knowledge of Oneself

You, as an effective instructor, must understand your motivation for being an instructor of adults. You must also be aware of your responsibilities to your firm or organization, as well as to the learners you will influence as a behavior model and change agent.

The first requirement of you as an instructor is that you have a strong sense of purpose. Each instructor must define his or her own goals. An instructor must select a target and zero in on it.

How do you, as an instructor, define your individual goals? One way is to ask a series of questions about the instructional assignment and how it fits into the big picture:

- What is the mission of the firm or organization?
- What is the purpose of training for the firm or organization??
- What is my relationship, as an instructor, to the mission of the firm or organization?

- For what aspects of learners' learning am I responsible?
- How is the subject that I teach directly related to the actual job(s) my learners perform?

You must find valid answers to each of these questions; moreover, you should have the answers firmly in mind before teaching the first lesson.

Well-defined goals are of no value unless they are worthwhile. Make sure that yours are useful and important for both your learners and your organization. And finally, remember that some goals are unrealistic if they are beyond the capabilities of either you or your learners.

Knowledge of the Learner

To enhance the learning environment you must understand adult learning theory and be able to use motivational and group dynamics techniques. You also must carry out initial and ongoing audience analyses to ensure that your learners receive instruction tailored to their needs . . . .

Knowledge of the Subject

Draw upon your content knowledge and keep abreast of current data and future trends in your particular field. Never consider it sufficient to be one unit ahead of your learners.

Knowledge of Appropriate Instructional Techniques

You must be familiar with the best methods for preparing and presenting subject matter content . . . [and] with the different media that can make content "come alive."

Knowledge of Administrative Requirements and Ethical Responsibilities

You must be aware of necessary organizational and administrative requirements (e.g., grading and returning exams, keeping attendance rolls, noting lesson plan revisions) and must fulfill these requirements in a punctual and professional manner. You should also understand and implement the various policies (e.g., safety, equal employment opportunity) of your firm or organization. Finally, you must understand where you fit within the firm or organization's chain of command and appreciate your function as a change agent.

A typical firm or organization has its standard of ethical conduct which forms the basis for public confidence and also creates an atmosphere of mutual respect and solidarity within and outside that firm or organization. You must be aware of and implement these ethical standards through your training program. A sample Code of Ethics (from the organization in which I worked)) is displayed [below].

A Code of Ethics for Instructors

- Seek and share truth.
- Govern behavior by ethically sound principles.
- Maintain high standards of professional integrity.
- Recognize unique human personalities and strive to help each learner reach full potential.
- Deal impartially with all learners.
- Strive to broaden understandings and knowledge to become a better instructor and leader.
- Contribute to and loyally support the organization and its missions and standards.
- Be conscious of the privilege and responsibility to preserve and strengthen the integrity of the organization.

You are responsible for dealing justly and impartially with your learners, regardless of their physical, mental, racial, or religious characteristics. You must also display integrity and loyalty to other members of the profession. Finally, you are to give wholehearted support to your programs.

Your Roles and Responsibilities as an Instructor

What separates an effective instructor from a competent technician or subject matter specialist? Having gained a knowledge of the requisite personal attributes and characteristics of instructors, another major step in the process of becoming an effective instructor is to become familiar with specific instructional roles and responsibilities, some of which are listed and then discussed below (GPU Nuclear 1986, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1982, U.S. Navy 1976).

You Are a Professional

As a professional instructor, you will conform to your personal ethical standards, as well as those of your firm or organization. A typical firm and its training program should have standards in areas such as—

- Training Program Operation
- Instructional Expertise
- Instructor Demeanor
- Evaluation
- Housekeeping
- Technical Expertise
- Instructional Methodology
- Classroom Etiquette
- Planning and Scheduling
- Recordkeeping

You, as a professional, are also responsible for understanding fully and supporting the standards that apply to your profession and suggesting changes to these standards as you see needs arise. In addition, you must implement those standards meticulously and consistently, remaining technically and instructionally proficient.

You Are a Leader

The word "education" comes from the Latin word *educare*, which is a combination of *e*, meaning "out," and *ducere*, "to lead." Ideally, education is a process by which a person is "led out," into a search for knowledge, deeper insights, and increased wisdom.

How do you "lead" learners? A good leader is able to get the best from subordinates. However, no effective leader actually does the subordinates' work for them. Instead, as an instructor, you lead, guide, direct, and point the way. It follows, therefore, that you must ensure that your learners put serious effort into the learning enterprise. Your learning goals can be reached most efficiently by the combined efforts of you and your learners.

In the final analysis, learners learn individually. After all, learning is change and growth that goes on in the individual. Each learner manifests unique drives, anxieties, frustrations, abilities, hopes, and potentialities. Learners bear little resemblance to a product that comes off the end of an assembly line. You face the challenge, responsibility, and opportunity to mold new personnel through your instructional leadership.

You Are Well Prepared to Instruct

Making errors in the classroom, whether through inaccuracies or poor presentation or in your demeanor, can adversely affect the attitude and behavior of the learners in the classroom and their performance on the job. In addition, your credibility and/or that of the training program can be tarnished. For this reason, you must be well prepared. This includes—

- knowing and understanding the material to be taught;
- understanding applicable learning theory, including awareness of learners' needs, attitudes, motivation, and ability;
- being completely familiar with the instructional systems approach to the design and development of instruction;
- organizing the instructional format and setting; and
- being emotionally and psychologically ready to cope with learner needs

On the humanistic side, in order for you to be an effective instructor you must also—

- demonstrate sincere concern for, and interest in, participants' progress and well-being;
- be interested in finding out more about learners' abilities, and encourage learners to strengthen and develop these points;
- work one-to-one with individual learners as needed;
- provide practical applications of the training, showing learners how they can use their new knowledge or skills on the job: this makes it easier to transfer training to actual work performance; and
- approach the learning situation with a sense of humor, using it to lighten, rather than create, tension.

You Establish Mutual Trust

Your firm or organization entrusts you with the responsibility for determining whether or not a learner has sufficiently mastered certain skills and knowledge. Standards of performance, established in each training program, must be met as part of a learner's qualification to undertake a specified job function. The organization trusts that you will not recommend anyone who has not mastered the required skills and knowledge.

A second trust, an educational trust, is given by the learners to you, as the instructor. This trust is that you will prepare them to perform the job properly, thus demonstrating care for and interest in them.

Your foremost responsibility is to maintain the organization's standards and to pass or recommend only those learners who meet those standards. Your next responsibility is to help the learners understand the required material and master the appropriate skills. This dual accountability puts a heavy burden of responsibility upon you. You must preserve a teaching/learning relationship with the learners and, at the same time, maintain organizational standards. You must be supportive, but never suggest that there are any shortcuts around the standards.

To further compound the issue of trust, while you are an instructor, you are also an employee of the organization, and must, from time to time, also be a fellow learner alongside others who earlier may have been instructed by you.

These three roles may appear to be in conflict, but they are not. In fact, they give a perfect opportunity for the instructor to model proper job-related behavior in a complex situation. When learners assume their jobs in the work environment, they will be required to respond in similar role conflicts on the job. They may very well work with or for people with whom they become friends. Unfortunately, in certain situations, these people may ask their fellow workers to compromise the standards or bend the rules. The reasons for allowing any deviation usually seem compelling to those who ask: there may not be enough time to finish the job properly or they may want to cover up an error. No matter what the reason, a request to ignore a standard must be denied. The person involved must be encouraged to correct and/or avoid the deviation before it becomes a serious safety concern and/or a possible legal problem. The incident even may have to be reported to management.

Similarly, every instructor at some point encounters a learner who seems responsible and knowledgeable in class discussions, but who consistently fails. You, as an instructor, have a "gut" feeling that the person should be able to qualify for this job, yet he or she has failed the work. In this case, you are doubly accountable. First, you must uphold the standards by not passing the learner. Second, you must meet with such learners and attempt to find ways to improve their performance.

Obviously, the learner should be provided with guidance and help. You have a responsibility to facilitate and support each learner's attempt to master the material, but must also establish a clear understanding that the standards will not be lowered. The learner must then heed the advice and seek the suggested help.

You Establish Credibility

Credibility is a faith which one person (the learner) develops in another person (the instructor) only after reasonable grounds have been established. This is accomplished when there is total consistency between the instructor's ideals and actual practices. Credibility is difficult to earn and easy to lose. You, as an instructor, must establish and maintain your own credibility and the credibility of the organization.

Sometimes a single, seemingly insignificant event can destroy your credibility as an instructor. For example, punctuality is a sign of a highly professional operation. Lack of punctuality suggests that the operation is less than professional and, therefore, not credible. It is not businesslike for a class, scheduled to start at 8 a.m., not to start until 15 or 20 minutes past the hour. If people leave 5, 10, or 15 minutes or more before the end of their scheduled work day, credibility is damaged. If lunch is scheduled to be completed at 1:00, and class does not start until 1:15, again, credibility is damaged.

Any lack of professionalism in the classroom can severely damage credibility. You must establish high professional standards for yourself and also demand high standards of professionalism from the learners. Negative attitudes, feet on the tables,

leaving the classroom messy, intentionally damaging company property, sloppy dress standards, and lack of respect for others are all specific examples of a lack of professionalism.

Never minimize the significance of credibility: seemingly small events can have a very destructive impact on both your credibility and that of the organization. You need to earn the reputation of being a highly professional individual in order to instruct effectively. The training organization will share both the positive and negative reputation of its instructors.

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Reflection on Reading 1

- Cantor describes roles and attributes of an effective instructor. With which of these do you, as an instructor, feel most comfortable? Why?

Roles/Attributes	Reasons

- What would you add to Cantor's code of ethics?

- Are there any circumstances under which you would have or have had difficulties adhering to this code of ethics? Why?

"SETTING THE CLIMATE FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING" by B. R. Sisco
In *Creating Environments for Effective Adult Learning*, edited by R. Hiemstra, 41-50
New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, No. 50
San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, © 1991. Reprinted with permission.

Mary White had just returned from an exhilarating night at her local community college where she had begun a course on "Life Work Planning." She had been away from school for nearly twenty years, and after raising two children and surviving an unpleasant divorce, she was looking forward to starting a career in retail sales. Years before, her father had been a successful clothier in the small town where she grew up, and during summers she worked in the store. Mary had many fond memories of this experience and hoped to one day start her own clothing business. But before doing so, she needed to learn more about operating a small business and developing a business plan.

Several weeks earlier, Mary had been discussing her plans with a friend who suggested that she contact the career-planning office of the local community college for assistance. Mary was pleased to learn of a new small business certificate program that sounded good. But before jumping in, the counselor suggested she take the "Life Work Planning" course as a way of clarifying her goals and building confidence.

Now that the first class session was over, Mary could hardly restrain herself. Many good things had happened during the evening. She thought how neat the other twelve students were and how competent and caring the instructor seemed to be. She was impressed by how quickly the time went, noting that two and one-half hours is a long time to sit, but a short break was included in the middle of the session. She also recalled how her initial anxiety gave way to calm as she learned about the other participants and their reasons for taking the course. The instructor had made her feel comfortable and confident that her life experiences were of value. "Yes," Mary said to herself, "I think I'm going to enjoy this class and the people in it. I'm glad the counselor suggested I take it first. I can't wait for our next meeting!"

Most instructors would be elated to have someone like Mary in class since she seems so enthusiastic and ready to learn. She represents the epitome of a motivated learner, the kind often idealized in adult education literature. But a closer reading of Mary's story reveals certain anxieties associated with the teaching and learning process that, left unchecked, could make the difference between success and failure for teacher and student alike. There are thousands of adults like Mary who approach a new course or workshop with varying degrees of anxiety. For some, the thought of returning to school after a long interruption may cause physical or psychological pain as they wonder whether they can still learn and keep up. For others who have been frequent participants in continuing professional education activities, the pressure of balancing work responsibilities and academic assignments may lead to personality changes.

Successful instructors are aware of the wide range of anxieties that adults bring to the classroom and make an effort to deal with them early. They realize that the first session is crucial to the eventual success of that undertaking. By creating a climate in which each participant can feel comfortable, secure, and able to learn, they have created the conditions for successful teaching and learning.

This chapter addresses the importance of climate setting as a means for enhancing the teaching and learning environment. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of the first time an instructor meets with learners and how this can ensure subsequent success in the teaching and learning process. Such issues as planning for the first session, using icebreakers, and monitoring the learning environment are discussed. Finally, a model for organizing the first session's work is described, followed by concluding comments.

Climate Setting Defined

Most of us have a fairly good idea of what the term *climate* means. With respect to a geographical place or region, climate refers to the typical weather patterns based on time of the year. But climate can carry another connotation such as prevailing condition, atmosphere, or ambiance; this meaning is the chapter's focus in the context of teaching and learning, particularly with adults.

A few years ago, Apps (1985, 1989) described a process of helping teachers and other adult educators analyze what it is they do. An early part of this analysis involves critical examination of the assumptions we make about our role as teachers and of those we make about the nature and role of our adult students and the teaching-learning transaction. Apps used metaphors to help participants clarify their assumptions about the teaching and learning process.

For example, two instructors offering the same noncredit workshop on financial planning at the local night school can operate very differently. The first instructor organizes and teaches the class along fairly traditional lines. The syllabus is clearly laid out with course objectives described in performance terms. The main teaching technique is a lecture, participants are seated in five rows, and the instructor uses only personal examples rather than selecting examples from the group.

In contrast, the second instructor has a syllabus, but this is contained in a workbook along with other items such as learning activity descriptions, suggested course objectives, and related reading materials. The seating pattern of the class is semicircular ("sociopetal," as defined by Vosko), so each participant can see one another, and the instructor can have small groups working on a common learning activity. Clearly, the two instructors are engaging learners and operationalizing the teaching-learning transaction in different ways.

Thinking metaphorically, how can we describe the methods by which the two instructors teach the financial planning course? The first instructor is following the learner-as-machine metaphor. This instructor uses a prescriptive teaching approach and encourages a passive role for learners. In contrast, the second instructor sees the teaching-learning transaction as an opportunity for learners to grow and develop using personal experience. Learners are encouraged to relate their experience to the course content with the instructor serving as a process facilitator. In this situation, the appropriate metaphor might be learner-as-flower, noting the developmental emphasis implicit in the experience.

The process of climate setting can also be analyzed metaphorically, since it makes a number of assumptions regarding adults as learners and regarding the aims of educators and their beliefs about content and process and the teaching-learning transaction (Apps 1989). In this chapter, climate setting is used as a metaphor for effective teaching, particularly with adults. This approach is based on the notion that adults are mature individuals who want to be treated as such. They tend to be diverse in nature, owing to the breadth of their experiences, and have a nascent need to direct their own learning. Because of these conditions, it is important for instructors to create climates early in the learning experience that not only acknowledge such assumptions about adults but also enable the assumptions to surface in the teaching and learning process.

Other adult education writers agree with this posture and support the idea of climate setting, although different terminology may be used. One of the best-known advocates of climate setting is Knowles (1980), who sees it as tantamount to helping people learn. He specifically uses the term *educative environment* as analogous to climate setting to describe those conditions that promote the growth and development of adults. These conditions include—

- respect for personality;
- participation in decision making;
- freedom of expression and availability of information; and
- mutuality of responsibility in defining goals, planning and conducting activities, and evaluating (Knowles 1980, p. 67).

Another advocate for climate setting is Knox (1986), who focuses on the task of building supportive and active learning environments, especially during the first session. While acknowledging that some adults resist active participation because of its excessive effort, responsibility, and risk, most actually thrive under such conditions if they are supported and challenged early. Knox (1986,

pp. 132-134) suggests a number of ways that an instructor can create a supportive and challenging setting, especially during the first session:

- Choose attractive facilities that participants are likely to find hospitable and comfortable.
- Help participants get acquainted with each other.
- Present oneself as a person.
- Reduce apprehension by using icebreakers or warm-up activities that reflect empathy and learner advocacy.
- Encourage active participation by having participants introduce themselves.
- Provide an overview of the course or workshop content.
- Obtain feedback from participants about their initial reactions.
- Encourage the return to the learning experience by emphasizing success.
- Be available for informal conversation.
- Review and summarize the first session.
- Provide an advance organizer of what will occur during the next class session.

Still another supporter of climate setting is Brookfield (1990), who believes that the building of trust is essential for meaningful learning. He identifies a number of characteristics that make instructors more trustworthy in the eyes of students, including teacher credibility and authenticity. According to Brookfield—

> Teacher credibility refers to teachers' ability to present themselves as people with something to offer students. When teachers have this credibility, students see them as possessing a breadth of knowledge, depth of insight, and length of experience that far exceeds the students' own (1990, pp. 163-164).

Teacher authenticity consists of—

- being explicit about how the teaching and learning experience is to be organized and the evaluative criteria used,
- making sure one's words and actions as an instructor are consistent and congruent,
- being ready to admit errors,
- revealing aspects of oneself as a person outside an instructor's role,
- taking students seriously by listening carefully to their concerns, anxieties, or problems, and
- realizing the power of role modeling.

All of these tasks must be done with care and consistency. As Brookfield (1990) says—

> Teaching is never easy, and of all the complex balances we try to attain, being credible and authentic in the right proportions is one of the most difficult (p. 176).

Successful climate setting aids such critical balancing during the first session.

Preparing to Meet with Learners

There are actually many decisions to be made and activities to be planned before the first meeting with learners. One of the first is development of a rationale statement that describes the learning experience's purposes, the instructional process, and how and why the experience will contribute to personal as well as professional development. Other activities include identification of desired learning competencies, determination of associated requirements, and acquisition of necessary learning resources such as books, articles, and audiovisual materials.

A useful device for organizing the various learning materials is a workbook or study guide. Here, many of the learning materials can be assembled, such as the course, workshop, or training syllabus; descriptions of suggested requirements; bibliographical citations; simulations, case studies, or skill-based learning activities; and special readings.

An important advantage of creating a workbook or study guide is that it helps facilitate advanced planning and preparation for the various learning experiences to come. It also serves as an initial resource for both instructors and learners to update as needed. On a personal level, the workbook or study guide helps learners obtain a broad picture of the learning experience, and many appreciate having materials assembled in one convenient package.

Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Having completed any necessary preplanning activities, the next step is to establish a positive learning environment during the initial meeting with learners. Once again, there are a number of activities that often happen during the first few hours that an instructor and learners are together.

Initial contact with learners. Adults enroll in courses and workshops for a variety of reasons. Some enroll to update skills, others enroll for social reasons, while still others attend to address specific problems (Pratt 1984). Whatever the reasons, it is important for an instructor to set a positive tone during the first session, since this is the time when learners form personal attitudes about the subject, the instructor, and the instructional process (Hiemstra and Sisco 1990). The hope is that each learner leaves the first session with the same enthusiasm as did Mary White in the opening vignette. But her reaction was not accidental; it resulted from a deliberate attempt by an instructor to set a positive tone.

What are some of the activities that an instructor can pursue to create a positive environment? One of the first is to arrange the physical classroom space so that it is conducive to teaching and learning. It is recommended that the instructor arrive at least thirty minutes before class time so that the room can be made more comfortable and inviting for adult learners. This task often involves rearranging chairs in a semicircle or around a conference table so that all participants can see each other, adjusting the room temperature to a comfortable level, making sure that any audiovisual equipment is operating and visible at a distance, checking the chalkboard for chalk, and seeing that the lighting is adjusted properly.

Another suggestion is to bring along a hot pot to heat water for tea, coffee, and hot chocolate as well as assorted snacks for use during a break midway through the session.

Once participants start arriving, a warm, personal greeting is always welcome. Handshakes and self-introductions are nice touches as they help set an informal tone and give the instructor some idea about who is in attendance. Adults generally appreciate these gestures, even if some are shy and reserved.

Creating the three Rs. After participants have arrived and are seated comfortably, the major activities for the first session begin. Learners are going to have many questions, feelings, and thoughts as the instructor calls the session to order, all of which become opportunities for positive climate setting if handled properly. An especially good way of beginning is to address the following three key questions during the first session (Sisco 1987):

- *Who are we?"* Asking this question and even summarizing learners' responses are good ways of helping learners get to know one another and realize that they share many of the same questions and feelings. The question and responses also help to start the process of working together and creating a relaxed, informal environment.
- *Who am I as the instructor?* In asking and answering this question, an instructor can establish credibility and authenticity with learners by indicating his or her qualifications to lead the educational experience. A particularly productive way of answering is to describe one's educational and experiential background. This is also a good time to share personal beliefs about what constitutes good and bad instruction and how this course or workshop will be a positive learning experience, even though there may be a good deal of personal challenge involved.
- *Why are we here?* This question is a good lead-in to describing the general focus of the educational experience by touching on the overall content, suggested objectives, and instructional process. Also, any important housekeeping items can be discussed, such as attendance requirements, breaks, location of restrooms, and policies on food, refreshments, and smoking.

By taking time to address these questions, an instructor can help participants develop three types of relationships—the three *R*s—that are important in any classroom experience (Hiemstra and Sisco 1990):

- Relationships with other class members, many of whom become valuable resources, support givers, and close friends
- Relationships with the instructor, built on mutual trust, respect, and credibility

- Relationships with the content, material, and resources of the course or workshop

Each of the three types of relationships normally exists to some extent in any class setting; however, two of them are typically overlooked or not even considered by many instructors. Often, emphasis is placed on the content or material of the educational experience with little attention directed to class members and the instructor. Any mention of goals, expectations, and learning activities is made almost incidentally, if at all. Very often learners may even be discouraged from asking pertinent questions about their backgrounds or potential roles in the learning experience. Good instructors of adults realize the value of climate setting and create a balance by encouraging establishment of these three types of relationships during the first class session.

Using icebreakers. Icebreakers are techniques used at the beginning of the first session to reduce tension and anxiety, help acquaint participants with each other, foster involvement of all class members, and assist the instructor in getting to know class members and their range of experiences (Draves 1984). They are very effective tools for initiating the three *R*s and can take many forms. The following are five icebreakers that all take less than an hour to complete, depending on the class size.

- *Self-introductions.* Participants introduce themselves and give reasons why they are attending the course or workshop.
- *Partner introductions.* Divide the group into pairs. A short interview is conducted by one partner of the other partner for five to ten minutes, then the roles are reversed. Partners then introduce each other to the entire group.
- *Name chain.* Participants introduce themselves one at a time to the group, each by saying his or her name and an adjective that begins with the same letter as the name. Each person in the chain must repeat all previous names and descriptors.
- *Six critters.* Display six different signs around the classroom, each with one of these words: owl., ostrich, rhinoceros, chameleon, fox, or lamb. Ask each participant to select the sign that best describes his or her dominant personality style. Divide participants into groups by the critter chosen and have group members introduce each other and list their critter's qualities. Then ask a recorder from each group to report the findings to the large group.
- *Character descriptions.* Have participants write down on pieces of paper their favorite foods, television programs, celebrities, animals, and musical artists. Then, one by one, have the participants relate these descriptions to the group and give their names. Be sure they explain the reasons for each choice.

There are many other icebreakers that instructors can use. Instructors should experiment with different types and even create their own variations.

Monitoring the learning environment. As the first class session unfolds, it is important to ensure that the learning environment remains positive. Be sure that the physical space remains comfortable and inviting by monitoring the room temperature so that it does not get too cold or hot. Observe the level of participation, noting that as the session progresses participants should become more involved in the proceedings. Periodically, use reinforcing statements that emphasize one's understanding of the anxiety that many people face as they return to the classroom and one's commitment to everyone's success. These kinds of statements can bolster credibility and trustworthiness as an instructor. Finally, make sure that each participant leaves the first session, as Mary White did, wanting to return. As an old sage once said, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink." The instructor's role is to make the horse thirsty.

Learners' Concerns in the First Class Session: Using the PERC Model

Learners have diverse feelings, thoughts, and questions as they begin a new learning experience. Pratt (1984) has devised a model for dealing with these feelings and questions about a course or workshop:

> People need a predictable basis for interacting and will do so whether an instructor guides the process or not. Norms and expectations evolve naturally and inevitably. Yet, when the process is left to chance, problems arise due to ambiguity or misunderstanding. Such problems usually

> relate to purpose, expectations, roles, or content (PERC) and can be avoided or reduced if these elements are clarified at the outset (Pratt 1984, p. 7).

In order to clarify these elements, Pratt devised a number of questions that should be raised in connection with the learning experience. He recommends that instructors take time during the first class session to address them. [The box on the next page shows] a checklist of questions for instructors, adapted from Pratt's work.

By taking time during the first class session to create a positive and open climate for learning and by addressing the natural feelings and questions adults frequently bring to the classroom, an instructor can go a long way toward establishing an environment that promotes growth for everyone involved. Pratt's PERC model, together with the other suggestions noted earlier, offers a good road map to follow.

Conclusion

Instruction of adults can be a most gratifying experience, but because of their vast experiential base and potential for high motivation, the challenge of teaching and learning is especially great. At the same time, adults bring numerous feelings, questions, and doubts about a course or workshop that, left unheeded, can dampen the true potential for everyone involved. By anticipating these feelings and thoughts, organizing instructional efforts accordingly, and taking steps during the first class session to promote an effective climate, an instructor can ensure the overall success of the teaching and learning process. As Highest (1950, p. 57) observed more than forty years ago, "Togetherness is the essence of teaching."

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Instructor's Questions for the First Class Session

Directions: Use the following questions as guides for thinking about the first few hours that you spend with learners. The blank can be checked as you consider each one.

Purposes

____ How can you help individual students relate the learning experience to their individual needs?

____ How can the course help students face personal difficulties at home or work?

____ How will the course relate to other courses that students may currently have or have already taken?

____ Why should a student take this particular course?

Expectations

____ What should you expect of students in terms of work load and the scheduling of time?

____ How similar or dissimilar are the students and what are possible consequences of numerous dissimilarities?

____ What individual problems or situations may exist for which you may need to work out special arrangements?

Roles

____ How will you be perceived by various learners?

____ What kinds of assistance can you give to various learners?

____ What are your views about learners' disagreements with you in class and how can you communicate such views?

____ How can you help learners feel at ease with their active planning and participation in learning experiences?

Content

____ How can you communicate to learners what they can expect to learn and what they should study?

____ What can you say about the time required and allowed for practicing and applying course information?

____ How can you help individual learners feel comfortable about their abilities to compete with other course participants?

ARRANGING THE INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING

Most publications on the principles of instruction provide some information on how to arrange the classroom facility to optimize instruction. Seasoned teachers typically respond to this information with a chuckle (or a groan) because, they say, "we have no control over the facilities we are assigned."

It is, in fact, true that certain things may be beyond a teacher's immediate control. There may be no thermostat in the room with which to adjust the temperature. The amount of "adjustment" for lighting may be fairly limited: ON or OFF. There may be no choice in the furniture you will have to work with. Nonetheless, if creating an environment conducive to learning is important to you, there are many things you can do to reach that goal.

If you are asked in advance about your preferences for facilities, knowing what constitutes an optimum adult learning environment can help you to communicate those needs; for example:

- As we age, our visual acuity declines. Adequate lighting becomes more and more important. In addition, some learners with particularly poor eyesight may need to be seated close to the front of the room during a presentation in order to see the visuals.
- Adults in a workplace literacy program have roles to fulfill other than that of learner. They have a full- or part-time job, and they may be spouses and/or parents and/or caregivers of elderly parents. In short, they have a lot on their plates. To fit the learning program onto that full plate is often a challenge. To come to the program after an 8-hour shift and before going home to assume the spouse/parent/caregiver role, for example, can be particularly difficult if the chairs are hard, the room is an uncomfortable temperature, the room arrangement makes it hard to see or hear, the room is drab and visually unpleasant, and so on.
- Flexibility is desirable because the environment should reflect the nature of the activities. If, for example, you want everyone (learners and teacher) to interact, to communicate freely, eye contact is needed. Thus, the chairs should be arranged in a circle, or everyone should be seated around a large table. If you want that same kind of communication during a teacher-led presentation, the chairs can be arranged in a u-shape, with the teacher at the head. However, if you want learners' undivided attention on you or a film, then the chairs should indeed all be facing front. If learners need to be working on individual projects, they need space to spread out and work without distractions. Flexibility should allow for all these situations—for work to occur individually, with peers, in small groups, or in large groups.

  A traditional classroom setting, with a teacher's desk at the front and straight rows of fastened-down chairs with small writing palettes on one "arm," is not conducive to collaborative, learner-centered instruction. Nor are those small writing palettes conducive to writing tasks beyond taking notes during a presentation; there's little space to spread out and create.
- Another potential disadvantage of the traditional classroom setting is the negative associations it may have for learners. Often, people who come to workplace literacy programs are those for whom schooling did not "work" in the past. Thus creating a non-school-like environment in every respect can be crucial.

- Adults whose literacy skills are inadequate may be embarrassed about this and reluctant to be seen participating in a class addressing literacy skills. A friendly, warm environment can help minimize or dispel their discomfort.

If you are assigned a room without any choice concerning its layout or furnishings, you can still be creative. For example, assume you are assigned to the "traditional classroom setting" described above. Although the chairs are fastened down in rows, perhaps the room has a great deal of space at the front. You might be able to request folding chairs that could be arranged in small circles at the front of the room for discussions. Furthermore, "even the simple act of closing a door to a classroom can create intimacy, shut out noise and other interference, warm up or cool down the temperature, help to relax a tense situation, indicate cohesiveness, or indicate the beginning or ending of a situation."[1] A drab facility can be transformed into a bright, cheerful, adult learning environment with the use of posters and bulletins and other visuals related to instruction (e.g., safety signs from the job).

You can also work through channels to bring about change. You can document any facility problems, identify the established procedure for dealing with facility requests (whom to contact, the form in which the contact should be made), and then be assertive (not aggressive) in trying to get the problems solved.

A "bottom-line" focus might be helpful here. Workplace training is expensive; if problems with the facility are making the training less effective, that's a cost factor. If the air conditioner or heating system produces a loud roar, learners cannot hear well; if half the lights are burned out, they can't see well. If it's so hot that learners are having difficulty staying awake, they're not learning. If it's so cold that learners are shivering, their attention is focused on their discomfort, not their studies.

Common sense is also needed. The room could be a comfortable temperature, yet one person could be complaining of the heat and one could be wrapped in a coat. People's "comfort zones" vary; sometimes the best you can aim for is to please the majority and sympathize with the minority.

The key factor, however, is one mentioned previously: is creating an environment conducive to learning important to you? If you care about the environment, you will not accept an unsatisfactory status quo; you will work to ensure that the instructional program is supported and enhanced by the environment for learning.

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1. J. E. Heimlich and E. Norland, *Developing Teaching Style in Adult Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1994), p. 94.

Reflection on Reading 2

- Think about your years as a student. What teachers did you like best? What did they have in common?
- Think about the teachers you liked the least. What did they have in common?
- List the factors in a learning environment that you find conducive to learning. What role does each one play in helping you?

Factors	Roles

Excerpted from "COMMUNICATION AND THE INSTRUCTOR"
In *Delivering Instruction to Adult Learners* by J. A. Cantor, 27-33
Toronto, Ontario: Wall and Emerson, 1992

Listening Skills

Effective listening is as important as effective speaking and is an integral part of nonverbal communication. Listening allows learners to absorb information, think, and learn. When listening, especially as an instructor, try to focus on understanding what is being said rather than getting ready to reply, contradict, or refute. Do not prepare your answer while listening, but rather be interested and alert, and do not interrupt. You should provide feedback, but avoid a negative response. Finally, remember that different learners will have varying abilities, language skills, and ways of expressing themselves—do not jump ahead of your learners but let them go at their own pace.

Here are a few suggestions on how to use good listening skills to communicate effectively as an instructor. Effective lessons capitalize on the group's interactions with each other as well as with you, the instructor. Therefore, incorporate the following ideas into your repertoire of skills.

Send positive non-verbal signals. Supportive, interested facial expressions, smiles, nods, etc., will convey to learners that you are listening to what they have to say. Maintaining good eye contact is another strong sign of interest.

Use encouraging verbal signals. Show interest in what the learner says and express a desire to know more of what they think by making short encouraging remarks, such as "Uh huh"; "Tell me more"; "What else?"; "Then, what?"

Restate and repeat the ideas or context. Restatement can serve several purposes. It promotes understanding and acts as an accuracy check. It shows the speaker that you understand what is being said and elicits more information from the speaker.

Allow for learner reflections. Listening carefully to learners encourages them to speak freely, with positive consequences for you, as well as them. You will be able to check on whether or not your learners have understood your instruction. They will be encouraged to continue and further elaborate, analyze, and clarify their thoughts. They will provide you with feedback and reaction that will assist you in recognizing, understanding, and accepting their feelings. And each time a learner speaks and reacts in class, others are encouraged to follow suit.

Use questions wisely. Open-ended questions encourage speakers to talk about their ideas or feelings and thus do not limit the responses. Probes, used with sensitivity, can elicit more information and encourage your listener to think. Closed, or factual questions, often limit response and cut the speaker off.

Capitalize upon silence. Pauses need not be embarrassing. By not filling the vacuum, you let the speaker know that you are interested in what is being said and expect a further response. Silence can be used to organize one's own thoughts.

Remember to summarize. During and at the end of a conversation or discussion, a summary of what has been said can clarify attitudes and reinforce understanding. It also conveys a sense of closure to the session.

Questioning Skills

Effective questioning is a key instructional skill. Questions are used in training for a variety of reasons, such as arousing curiosity and interest, stimulating discussion, channeling thinking, assisting in determining how well your learners understand the material, and encouraging your timid learners to express themselves.

Types of Questions

There are several types of questions. *Direct questions* are addressed to one specific person, giving that learner the opportunity to express specific

information. *Overhead questions* are addressed to the entire group and are useful in promoting thinking, starting discussion, and eliciting different opinions. Anyone in the group or class may respond to an overhead question, but if no one reacts, such an enquiry easily can be converted into a direct question. *Rhetorical questions* are addressed to the entire group; these are used to promote thinking and set a general theme. Such questions are not intended to produce an oral response. Upon receiving a question from a learner, you can turn it into a *relay question* by posing it to another learner. Relay questions can often result in valuable information received from learners.

To be effective, all questions posed, regardless of type, should be brief, easily understood, and nonantagonistic. Ask questions in a friendly, sincere manner. Avoid asking questions that your learners cannot answer or that are too easy. Avoid asking questions that require simple "yes" or "no" or one-word responses. For example:

- *Poor question:* When the meter reads "0" do the circuits automatically close?
- *Better question:* What happens to the circuits when the meter reads "0"?

Actively Seek Feedback

In addition to formal feedback methods such as tests and quizzes, as an instructor you must question your learners constantly in order to achieve your instructional goals. Furthermore, a climate must be established in which the learners feel free to inquire. An instructor and an adult learner equally share the responsibility for ensuring that effective communication has occurred.

To keep your finger on the pulse of learner progress, you should use the following technique: ask a question, pause briefly, and call on one individual.

The best questions are those that ensure that both communication and understanding have occurred. These questions will elicit a brief explanation ultimately leading to a correct answer. You should involve all learners in your questioning; do not allow a few to monopolize the conversation. Also ensure three-way communication by allowing learners to answer each other's questions and concerns. By continuously maintaining a warm, open atmosphere of mutual respect and joint inquiry, the classroom climate will encourage feedback. Remember that feedback, either oral or written, is the only way to ever know if you have communicated successfully. Never just say, "Are there any questions?" Always ask specific questions requesting feedback (one point at a time) on material covered in the lesson.

Handling Responses

How you handle the responses to your questions is just as important as how you ask the questions themselves. If responses are not handled effectively, you risk alienating a learner—or even the whole class. To avoid this, promptly acknowledge correct replies. Give learners time to rephrase unclear statements. When your learners answer incorrectly, it is your responsibility to lead them toward "discovering" the correct response. If an incorrect answer is given, never ridicule, humiliate, or make the learner appear foolish to the rest of the class. Simply thank the individual and ask, "Are there any other opinions on this?"

When the learners ask you a question, give some thought to your response before making it. Or you can ask other learners to handle some of the response; this relieves you from being the sole respondent. For example, in response to a learner's inquiry, you might say: "Is there anyone else who has some insight into that?" or "What does someone else think?" Then give your response after the class members have had their chance. If you do not know the answer, be honest. Tell your learners that you need to research the question and will get back to them later with the answer. Finally—and most significantly—try to be patient.

An Ultimate Communication Goal: Interaction Among Instructors and Learners

We, as instructors, must communicate on both the *content* and the *process* levels. Successful interaction between you and your learners requires careful attention to these two levels of communication. Content refers to the specific information or task upon which the class session will focus. It is concerned with the knowledge or skill to be learned. In order to be a credible and able instructor, you must be technically proficient (i.e., must know how to operate any equipment and perform all required skills). This is one half of the instructional process for which we are paid. However, only knowing the information does not qualify you

to teach it. If you cannot "get the information across," then you are useless as an instructor (Emergency Management Institute 1987).

The other half of our instructional expertise is process. This includes all other aspects of the instructional environment. It refers to the way the content will be communicated. It is also concerned with the relationship and/or rapport between learner and instructor.

A few suggestions for improving instructor/learner interaction follow (National Fire Academy n.d.).

Create a learning climate. Communicate in ways that contribute to a positive learning climate for the group and demonstrate a positive model of behavior. Support people who try out new skills and experiences. Provide feedback that is descriptive and not evaluative. If the group flounders and becomes distracted from the overall purpose of the session, introduce instructional techniques, exercises (verbal, nonverbal), etc., to bring the group back on task.

Uphold your learning standards, even when the group does not follow them. When someone becomes critical or ignores the feelings of other people, articulate what you see happening to the group. Explain your concern about its effect on the group's learning climate.

Give your opinions and express your feelings. Be a person. Be genuine. Let the learners realize that you are part of the learning experience and the group, and that you care about their concerns and problems. Use three-way communication.

Flow with the group. Provide as many opportunities as you can for learners to experience success in identifying, analyzing, and generalizing. These experiences can be used to improve instructional skills and increase job performance.

See yourself as a resource person. Be a helper/instructor in addition to the leader or key person in the group. Your learners have to go back to their jobs and be able to function without you. If you become too important, you will create dependency, and your learners will not be able to apply what they learned. So do not comment excessively or be overly directive with the group or speak before other group members can collect their thoughts.

Respond to situations as they arise. Your feelings are your best guide. Trust your own ideas and do what seems right to you at the time. Later, reassess the situation and determine what you could have done differently. You are a learner, too.

Effective interaction occurs, in essence, in a learning environment free from fear and intimidation. The creation of a supportive climate of mutual trust is your ultimate goal.

Summary

While the content of training may be predetermined, the way in which the learning takes place is flexible. The choices made at this point grow out of your sensitivities toward your learners. When the concepts and suggestions described in this chapter and all others are considered, the process chosen will be learner-centered. Then learning will occur in the most effective manner possible.

To improve communication, review the effectiveness of your instruction at the end of each class session. Question yourself about both the instructional content and the process. (This is part of the post-course evaluation . . . .)

- Do I understand that good teaching is good communication, and that it does not occur by chance alone?
- When I am thinking ahead about what I shall teach, do I put myself in the place of learners? Do I build my presentation around their skills and knowledge? Do I draw on what they already know?
- Is there a better way to handle what I have to say? Have I discovered a way to teach this content that is better than the way I was originally taught?
- What methods did I use in teaching today's material? Was my approach instructor-centered, learner-centered, or both? Are there alternative approaches?
- What did I do in my class to facilitate learning? To hinder learning?
- How much control did I exhibit today? How much flexibility did I allow? Was I "sticking to the lesson plan" at the expense of encouraging real learning to take place?

- What kind of impression did I create in the minds of my learners? Did they feel free to ask a question, comment on my presentation, or make mistakes?
- How did I handle questions asked by learners? Was I "put off" by the interruptions or did I try to use the questions to help the learners learn? Did I ask if there was anyone in the class who could answer, or was I only interested in demonstrating my own level of expertise?

If you honestly and openly answer the above questions in a process of self-evaluation, then continued improvement will occur. Barriers to communication will fade and effective interactions will take place. To instruct well means to communicate well. Effective communication is the lifeblood of every instructional setting.

References

Anderson, J. A. *Communication Textbook*. Beverly Hills, CA: Age, 1988.

Brookfield, S. D. *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1986.

Emergency Management Institute. *Methods and Techniques of Adult Learning*. Emmitsburg, MD: Author, 1987.

National Fire Academy. "Use Easy Talk." Module 17 in the "Student Manual: Principles of Instruction." Emmitsburg, MD: Author, 1987.

Seiler, W. J.; Schuelke, L. D.; and Lieb-Brilhart, B. *Communication for the Contemporary Classroom*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1984.

Reflection on Reading 3

- Consider each of the ideas offered to improve listening skills. What is an additional benefit of using each?

Strategies for Improving Listening Skills	Benefits
Send positive non-verbal signals	
Use encouraging verbal signals	
Restate and repeat the ideas or context	
Allow for learner reflections	
Use questions wisely	
Capitalize upon silence	
Remember to summarize	

- Do you think of any disadvantages to these listening ideas?
- What are the five reasons given in the reading for asking questions of your learners? Can you think of others?

"LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING LITERACY TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE"
Adapted by J. W. Philippi from *Selected Legal Considerations Regarding Employee Literacy and Aptitude Testing* by B. Douglas and C. William, 3-17
Dallas, TX: Jackson & Walker, 1992

The basic federal statute prohibiting discrimination in employment in the U.S. is Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. This provision of the statute makes it unlawful for any employer having 15 or more employees to—

- fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or
- limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

The Civil Rights Act of 1991 amended Title VII in several significant ways. For example, the CRA 1991 now provides for jury trials in Title VII actions; compensatory and punitive damages in cases of intentional discrimination; establishes burdens of proof in **disparate impact** cases.

Proof of intent of discrimination is not required in all cases. If an employer has utilized or relied upon a facially neutral criterion, an employment policy or practice, or a device such as a standardized test, a plaintiff may attempt to show that a particular employment policy or practice has resulted in an "adverse impact" on the minority group or groups of which the plaintiff is a member. In a typical case, an employee demonstrates discriminatory impact by comparing the percentage of qualified persons in the employee's protected class who were negatively affected by the practice to the percentage of persons in another class not affected.

In a disparate impact case, the employer must demonstrate that the challenged policy, practice, or device is required by "business necessity," and must also **prove** that the policy or practice is job related for the position in question and consistent with business necessity. The job criteria must bear a demonstrative relationship to successful performance of the jobs for which they are used.

Professionally developed tests:

- It is not unlawful employment practice for an employer to give and to act upon the results of any *professionally developed ability test* provided that such test, its administration or action upon the results is not designed, intended, or used to discriminate because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
- Key requirements imposed on an employer's use of so-called "standardized tests" are: that the test must be "professionally developed;" that the test cannot be designed, intended, or used to discriminate; and that the test must be validated.
- The U.S. Supreme Court and the lower federal courts have imposed additional "job-relatedness' requirements on such tests, which are—
  1. the test must not have the effect of discriminating based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; and
  2. the test must be shown to have been "validated" through professional validation studies.

Validation:

- The purposes of validation requirement are to assure that the test (1) accurately predicts what it claims; (2) is "job-related," i.e., measures a person's ability to perform a specific job; and (3) does not exclude or disqualify a disproportionate number of protected minorities or women. If a test is found to fail one or more of these requirements, the employer is entitled to show that its use is justified by "business necessity."
- Three methods of test validation are recognized. Neither the courts nor the EEOC have expressed a preferred method.

  1. ***criterion or empirical validation*** examines the correlation between comparative success on the test and comparative success on some measure of job performance. There are two types:

     a. ***predictive study***—sample group of job applicants take the test and are selected without regard to their test scores; later, the employee's job performance is compared to their test scores;

     b. ***concurrent study***—the test is administered to employees and their current job performance is evaluated against their test scores.

     If a job analysis reveals that good job performance requires good vision, good hearing, good motor dexterity, tests for these skills can be validated by criteria related studies.

  2. ***content validation*** occurs when the test closely approximates the tasks to be performed on the job (example: a typing test).

  3. ***construct validation*** examines the significant relationship between a test and the identification of some trait required in the job performance. (Appropriate for traits such as intelligence, mechanical comprehension, verbal fluency.)

American Disabilities Act:

Effective for employers with more than 25 employees as of July 26, 1992, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Disability is defined as physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and consistent with business necessity. The ADA also requires reasonable accommodation for disabled individuals when testing.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

In the area of testing, confidentiality could involve the intrusiveness of the test question, the collection of test scores, storing of information and disclosure to other parties. Confidentiality and privacy issues also encompass the employers rights to the access of the information.

- Employer access: generally, employers having a legitimate reason for requesting a test should be entitled to receive the results.
- Employers may request that the employee sign a consent form granting permission to the employer to obtain the test results.
- Employee Access Statutes in many states regulate employee access to personnel files.
- Employers should use the same degree of caution in maintaining test results as they do in maintaining personnel records.
- Disclosure to third parties-liability for public disclosure of private facts could arise for employers who unreasonably publicize confidential information about employees. The results of tests generally will be viewed as confidential information and employers should be cautious about disclosing them to the party other than the employee himself. The standard governing the disclosure of confidential information is that the employer's business interest in disclosure should outweigh the employee's interest in keeping the scores private.

- Test administrators may be under an obligation to release individual test scores to employers. Test administrators who do not wish to do so may wish to limit disclosure of test scores to furnishing a summary range of scores. A test administrator should consider including a clause in its contract with the employer to protect itself for later demands by the employer for individual test scores.
- In some states (e.g., California), actual test questions can subject an employer to potential liability for violation of privacy. Employers should be careful in asking personal questions, or questions about sexual orientation, religion, or political activity.
- In connection with its responsibilities to represent employees in the bargaining unit, a union may seek to challenge various aspects of a test or testing procedure. The union may be entitled to receive information or documents concerning tests. The union is not entitled to test questions or answers where such disclosure would reduce the utility or validity of the test. Likewise, the union is not entitled to receive the test scores of employees without their consent.

Reflection on Reading 4

- Has the confidentiality of your or a colleague's workplace literacy class been breached? What were the consequences?

- What would you do if the employer of your workplace literacy students requested confidential information?

The Context of Workplace Literacy:
The Instructor

- For a portion of your program, develop a rationale that describes the learning experience's purposes, the instructional process, and how and why the experience will contribute to personal and professional development, as suggested in Reading 2. Include a statement abut the desired climate and how it will contribute to the outcomes. (If you are not yet teaching, observe a colleague's class and write about that, in consultation with the colleague.)

- Interpreting each of the items in Cantor's code of ethics (Reading 1), briefly describe a learning situation in which a controversy might arise. What role of the instructor might you play in this situation? When completed, discuss with colleagues or your reviewer.

  1. Seek and share truth.
     a. Interpretation:
     b. Situation:
     c. Instructor Role:
  2. Govern behavior by ethically sound principles.
  3. Maintain high standards of professional integrity.
  4. Recognize unique human personalities and strive to help each learner reach full potential.
  5. Deal impartially with all learners.
  6. Strive to broaden understandings and knowledge to become a better instructor and leader.
  7. Contribute to and loyally support the organization and its missions and standards.
  8. Be conscious of the privilege and responsibility to preserve and strengthen the integrity of the organization.

- Evaluate the space allotted to you for instruction. (If you are not yet teaching, evaluate a colleague's area.) Based on your evaluation, draw a new floor plan that remedies any current deficiencies.

- For the learning experience you selected, state how you will assess competency and how you can protect the confidentiality of your learners in the process.

TOPIC: The Context of Workplace Literacy: The Instructor

Evaluation Guidelines

Directions: Check your competency with the following criteria:

Learner Self-Check		Review Checklist
Did you—		Did the learner—
☐	1. Develop a rationale for a segment of your program that— a. clearly communicates to others the segment's purposes, instructional methods, and potential contributions to personal and professional development?	☐
☐	b. would be likely to convince others of the appropriateness of the segment's instructional design and learning climate?	☐
☐	2. Describe a learning situation that appropriately illustrates a controversy related to each ethical principal?	☐
☐	3. Select a positive and constructive instructor role for dealing with each identified controversy in an ethical manner?	☐
☐	4. Identify the major deficiencies in an existing instructional space?	☐
☐	5. Draw a floor plan for that space that includes realistic remedies for each identified deficiency?	☐
☐	6. Identify literacy testing procedures that provide for privacy, nondiscrimination, and accommodation for disabled individuals?	☐

Learner: _____

Reviewer: _____

Level of Performance: If the evaluation results indicate a need for further competency development—or if the learner wishes to pursue the topics covered in further breadth or depth—please refer to the supplementary resources described in the Annotated Bibliography, which follows.

Annotated Bibliography

Cantor, J. A. "Learning Environments." In *Delivering Instruction to Adult Learners*. Toronto, Ontario: Wall and Emerson, 1992.

This chapter discusses managing the learning environment, learner discipline in the learning environment, and selection of instructional media to enhance the learning environment.

Cantor, J. A. "Adult Educators: Who Are We?" In *Planning Instruction for Adult Learners*. Toronto, Ontario: Wall and Emerson, 1989.

This chapter focuses on the issues and conflicts adult educators face, such as prescribed curriculum, writing objectives, self-direction, evaluation, and institutional constraints.

Cantor, J. A. "The Roles We Play." In *Working with Adult Learners*. Toronto, Ontario: Wall and Emerson. 1992.

The many roles of an adult educator are discussed, including:

- The Expert Role
- The Planner Role
- The Instructor Role
- The Facilitator Role
- The Resource-Person Role
- The Manager Role
- The Model Role
- The Mentor Role
- The Co-Learner Role
- The Reformer Role
- The Reflective Practitioner Role
- The Researcher Role
- The Roles We Plan: A Summary
- Research on Educator Roles

Macaulay, B. A.; Rentsch, K; Schwendeman, R; and Jackson, J. *Agency and Partnership Based Orientation Program for Workplace Educators*. Malden, MA: Massachusetts Department of Education, October 1993.

This publication contains materials developed by Quinsigamond Community College staff for use in a preservice or inservice training activity for workplace education instructors and site coordinators. Derived from an ongoing need to update adult educators hired into the program on the specifics of teaching in workplace settings, the publication covers three areas: the community college and workplace education; program development and the workplace education instructor; curriculum development, assessment, and evaluation. Included are workshop outlines and activities.

Mahoney, V. L. M. "Adverse Baggage in the Learning Environment." In *Creating Environments for Effective Adult Learning*, edited by R. Hiemstra. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991.

Adults can carry into a learning environment external and internal "baggage" that adversely affects their abilities to engage in learning experiences. Ways in which the instructor can work with these obstacles are presented.